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THE SCARECROW



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TORONTO

THE SCARECROW

OR

THE GLASS OF TRUTH

A Tragedy of the Ludicrous

BY

PERCY MACKAYE



New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1908

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Set up and electrotyped. Published February, 1908.

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Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

To

MY MOTHER

IN MEMORY OF AUSPICIOUS

“COUNTINGS OF THE CROWS”

BY OLD NEW ENGLAND CORN-FIELDS



PREFACE

BUT for a fantasy of Nathaniel Hawthorne, this play, of course, would never have been written. In "Mosses from an Old Manse," the *Moralized Legend* "Feathertop" relates, in some twenty pages of its author's inimitable style, how Mother Rigby, a reputed witch of old New England days, converted a corn-patch scarecrow into the semblance of a fine gentleman of the period; how she despatched this semblance to "play its part in the great world, where not one man in a hundred, she affirmed, was gifted with more real substance than itself"; how there the scarecrow, while paying court to pretty Polly Gookin, the rosy, simpering daughter of Justice Gookin, discovered its own image in a looking-glass, returned to Mother Rigby's cottage, and dissolved into its original elements.

My indebtedness, therefore, to this source, in undertaking the present play, goes without saying. Yet it would not be true, either to Hawthorne's work or my own, to classify "The Scarecrow" as a dramatization of "Feathertop." Were it intended to be such, the many radical departures from the conception and the treatment of Hawthorne which are evident in the present work would have to be regarded as so many unwarrantable liberties taken with its

original material; the function of the play itself would, in such case, become purely formal,—translative of a narrative to its appropriate dramatic form,—and as such, however interesting and commendable an effort, would have lost all *raison d'être* for the writer.

But such, I may say, has not been my intention. My aim has been quite otherwise. Starting with the same basic theme, I have sought to elaborate it, by my own treatment, to a different and more inclusive issue.

Without particularizing here the full substance of Hawthorne's consummate sketch, which is available to every reader, the divergence I refer to may be summed up briefly.

The scarecrow Feathertop of Hawthorne is the imaginative epitome or symbol of human charlatanism, with special emphasis upon the coxcombry of fashionable society. In his essential superficiality he is characterized as a fop, "strangely self-satisfied," with "nobby little nose thrust into the air." "And many a fine gentleman," says Mother Rigby, "has a pumpkin-head as well as my scarecrow." His hollow semblance is the shallowness of a "well-digested conventionalism, which had incorporated itself thoroughly with his substance and transformed him into a work of art." "But the clothes in this case were to be the making of the man," and so Mother Rigby, after fitting him out in a suit of embroidered finery, endows him as a finishing touch "with a great deal of brass, which she applied to his forehead, thus

making it yellower than before. 'With that brass alone,' quoth she, 'thou canst pay thy way all over the earth.'"

Similarly, the other characters are sketched by Hawthorne in accord with this general conception. Pretty Polly Gookin, "tossing her head and managing her fan" before the mirror, views therein "an unsubstantial little maid that reflected every gesture and did all the foolish things that Polly did, but without making her ashamed of them. In short, it was the fault of pretty Polly's ability, rather than her will, if she failed to be as complete an artifice as the illustrious Feathertop himself."

Thus the *Moralized Legend* reveals itself as a satire upon a restricted artificial phase of society. As such, it runs its brief course, with all the poetic charm and fanciful suggestiveness of our great New Englander's prose style, to its appropriate *dénouement*, — the disintegration of its hero.

"'My poor, dear, pretty Feathertop,' quoth Mother Rigby, with a rueful glance at the relics of her ill-fated contrivance, 'there are thousands upon thousands of coxcombs and charlatans in the world made up of just such a jumble of worn-out, forgotten, and good-for-nothing trash as he was, yet they live in fair repute and never see themselves for what they are. And why should my poor puppet be the only one to know himself and perish for it?'"

Coxcombry and charlatanism, then, are the butt of Hawthorne's satire in his *Legend*. The nature of his theme, however, is susceptible of an application

far less restricted, a development far more universal, than such satire. This wider issue once or twice in his sketch he seems to have touched upon, only immediately to ignore again. Thus, in the very last paragraph, Mother Rigby exclaims: "Poor Feather-top! I could easily give him another chance and send him forth again to-morrow. But no! *His feelings are too tender—his sensibilities too deep.*"

In these words, spoken in irony, Hawthorne ends his narrative with an undeveloped aspect of his theme, which constitutes the starting-point of the conception of my play: the aspect, namely, of the essential *tragedy of the ludicrous*; an aspect which, in its development, inevitably predicates for my play a divergent treatment and a different conclusion. The element of human sympathy is here substituted for that of irony, as criterion of the common absurdity of mankind.

The scarecrow Feathertop is ridiculous, as the emblem of a superficial fop; the scarecrow Ravensbane is pitiful, as the emblem of human bathos.

Compared with our own ideas of human perfection, what human rubbish we are! Of what incongruous elements are we constructed by time and inheritance wherewith to realize the reasonableness, the power, the altruism, of our dreams! What absurdity is our highest consummation! (Yet the sense of our common deficiency is, after all, our salvation.) *There is one reality which is a basic hope for the realization of those dreams. This sense is human sympathy, which is, it would seem, a more searching critic of*

human frailty than satire. It is the growth of this sense which ^{enriches} dowers with dignity and reality the hollowest and most ludicrous of mankind, and becomes in such a fundamental grace of character.

In a recent critical interpretation of Cervantes' great work, Professor G. E. Woodberry writes: "A madman has no character; but it is the character of Don Quixote that at last draws the knight out of all his degradations and makes him triumph in the heart of the reader." And he continues: "Modern dismay begins in the thought that here is not the abnormality of an individual, but the madness of the soul in its own nature."

If for "madness" in this quotation I may be permitted to substitute *ludicrousness* (or *incongruity*), a more felicitous expression of my meaning, as applied to Ravensbane in this play, would be difficult to devise.

From what has been said, it will, I trust, be the more clearly apparent why "The Scarecrow" cannot with any appropriateness be deemed a dramatization of "Feathertop," and why its manifold divergencies from the latter in treatment and motive cannot with any just significance be considered as liberties taken with an original source. (Dickon, for example, whose name in the *Legend* is but a momentary invocation in the mouth of Mother Rigby, becomes in my play not merely the characterized visible associate of Goody Rickby ("Blacksmith Bess"), but the necessary foil of sceptical irony to the human growth of the scarecrow. So, too, for reasons of the play's

different intent, Goody Rickby herself is differentiated from Mother Rigby; and Rachel Merton has no motive, of character or artistic design, in common with pretty, affected Polly Gookin.

My indebtedness to the New England master in literature is, needless to say, gratefully acknowledged; but it is fitting, I think, to distinguish clearly between the aim and the scope of "Feathertop" and that of the play in hand, as much in deference to the work of Hawthorne as in comprehension of the spirit of my own.

P. M-K.

CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
December, 1907.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

JUSTICE GILEAD MERTON.

GOODY RICKBY (*"Blacksmith Bess"*).

LORD RAVENSBANE (*"Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova"*), *their hypothetical son.*

DICKON, *a Yankee improvisation of the Prince of Darkness.*

RACHEL MERTON, *niece of the Justice.*

MISTRESS CYNTHIA MERTON, *sister of the Justice.*

RICHARD TALBOT, *Esquire, betrothed to Rachel.*

SIR CHARLES REDDINGTON, *Lieutenant Governor.*

MISTRESS REDDINGTON } *his daughters.*
AMELIA REDDINGTON }

CAPTAIN BUGBY, *the Governor's Secretary.*

MINISTER DODGE.

MISTRESS DODGE, *his wife.*

REV. MASTER RAND, *of Harvard College.*

REV. MASTER TODD, *of Harvard College.*

MICAH, *a servant of the Justice.*

TIME. — *Late Seventeenth Century.*

PLACE. — *A town in Massachusetts.*



ACT I



ACT I

The interior of a blacksmith shop. Right centre, a forge. Left, a loft, from which are hanging dried cornstalks, hay, and the yellow ears of cattle-corn. Back centre, a wide double door, closed when the curtain rises. Through this door—when later it is opened—is visible a New England landscape in the late springtime: a distant wood; stone walls, high elms, a well-sweep; and, in the near foreground, a ploughed field, from which the green shoots of early corn are just appearing. The blackened walls of the shop are covered with a miscellaneous collection of old iron, horseshoes, cart wheels, etc., the usual appurtenances of a smithy. In the right-hand corner, however, is an array of things quite out of keeping with the shop proper: musical instruments, puppets, tall clocks, and fantastical junk. Conspicuous amongst these articles is a large standing mirror, framed grotesquely in old gold and curtained by a dull stuff, embroidered with peaked caps and crescent moons. Just before the scene opens, a hammer is heard ringing briskly upon steel. As the curtain rises there is discovered, standing at the anvil in the flickering light of a bright flame from the forge, a woman—powerful, ruddy, proud with a certain masterful beauty, white-haired (as though prematurely), bare-armed to the elbows, clad in a dark skirt (above her ankles), a loose blouse, open at the throat; a leathern apron and a workman's cap. The woman is GOODY RICKBY. On the anvil she is shaping a piece of iron. Beside her stands a

framework of iron formed like the ribs and backbone of a man. For a few moments she continues to ply her hammer, amid a shower of sparks, till suddenly the flame on the forge dies down.

GOODY RICKBY

Dickon! More flame.

A VOICE

[Above her.]

Yea, Goody.

[The flame in the forge spurts up high and suddenly.]

GOODY RICKBY

Nay, not so fierce.

THE VOICE

[At her side.]

Votre pardon, madame.

[The flame subsides.]

Is that better?

GOODY RICKBY

That will do.

[With her tongs, she thrusts the iron into the flame; it turns white-hot.]

Quick work; nothing like brimstone for the smithy trade.

[At the anvil, she begins to weld the iron rib on to the framework.]

There, my beauty! We'll make a stout set of ribs for you. I'll see to it this year that I have a scare-

crow can outstand all the nor'easters that blow. I've no notion to lose my corn-crop this summer.

[Outside, the faint cawings of crows are heard. Putting down her tongs and hammer, Goody Rickby strides to the double door, and flinging it wide open, lets in the gray light of dawn. She looks out over the fields and shakes her fist.]

So ye're up before me and the sun, are ye?

[Squinting against the light.]

There's one! Nay, two. Aha!

One for sorrow,
Two for mirth —

Good! This time we'll have the laugh on our side.

[She returns to the forge, where again the fire has died out.]

Dickon! Fire! Come, come, where be thy wits?

THE VOICE

[Sleepily from the forge.]

'Tis early, dame.

GOODY RICKBY

The more need —

[Takes up her tongs.]

THE VOICE

[Screams.]

Ow!

GOODY RICKBY

Ha! Have I got thee?

[From the blackness of the forge she pulls out with her tongs, by the right ear, the figure of a devil, horned and tailed. In general aspect, though he resembles a mediæval familiar demon, yet the suggestions of a goatish beard, a shrewdly humorous smile, and (when he speaks) the slightest of nasal drawls, remotely simulate a species of Yankee rustic.]

Goody Rickby substitutes her fingers for the tongs.]

Now, Dickon!

DICKON

Deus! I haven't been nabbed like that since St. Dunstan tweaked my nose. Well, sweet Goody?

GOODY RICKBY

The bellows!

DICKON

[Going slowly to the forge.]

Why, 'tis hardly dawn yet. Honest folks are still abed. It makes a long day.

GOODY RICKBY

[Working, while Dickon plies the bellows.]

Aye, for your black pets, the crows, to work in. That's why I'm at it early. You heard 'em. We must have this scarecrow of ours out in the field at his post before sunrise.

[Finishing.]

So, there! Now, Dickon boy, I want that you should —

DICKON

[Whipping out a note-book and writing.]

Wait! Another one! "I want that you should —"

GOODY RICKBY

What's that you're writing?

DICKON

The phrase, Goody dear ; the construction. Your New England dialect is hard for a poor cosmopolitan devil. What with *ut* clauses in English and Latinized subjunctives — You want that I should — Well?

GOODY RICKBY

Make a masterpiece. I've made the frame strong, so as to stand the weather; *you* must make the body lifelike so as to fool the crows. Last year I stuck up a poor sham and after a day they saw through it. This time, we must make 'em think it's a real human crittur.

DICKON

To fool the philosophers is my specialty, but the crows — hm !

GOODY RICKBY

Pooh ! That staggers thee !

DICKON

Madame Rickby, prod not the quick of my genius. I am Phidias, I am Raphael, I am the Lord God ! — You shall see —

[*Demands with a gesture.*]

Yonder broom-stick.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Fetching him a broom from the corner.*]

Good boy !

DICKON

[*Straddling the handle.*]

Haha! gee up! my Salem mare.

[*Then, pseudo-philosophically.*]

A broomstick — that's for imagination!

[*He begins to construct the scarecrow, while Goody Rickby, assisting, brings the constructive parts from various nooks and corners.*]

We are all pretty artists, to be sure, Bessie. Phidias, he sculptures the gods; Raphael, he paints the angels; the Lord God, he creates Adam; and Dickon — fetch me the poker — aha! Dickon! What doth Dickon? He nullifies 'em all; he endows the Scarecrow! — A poker: here's his conscience. There's two fine legs to walk on, — imagination and conscience. Yonder flails now! The ideal — the *beau idéal*, dame — that's what we artists seek. The apotheosis of scarecrows! And pray, what's a scarecrow? Why, the antithesis of Adam. — “Let there be candles!” quoth the Lord God, sitting in the dark. “Let there be candle-extinguishers,” saith Dickon. “I am made in the image of my maker,” quoth Adam. “Look at yourself in the glass,” saith Goodman Scarecrow.

[*Taking two implements from Goody Rickby.*]

Fine! fine! here are flails — one for wit, t'other for satire. *Sapristi!* with two such arms, my lad, how thou wilt work thy way in the world!



GOODY RICKBY

You talk as if you were making a real mortal,
Dickon.

DICKON

To fool a crow, Goody, I must fashion a crittur
that will first deceive a man.

GOODY RICKBY

He'll scarce do that without a head.

[Pointing to the loft.]

What think ye of yonder Jack-o'-lantern? 'Twas
made last Hallowe'en.

DICKON

Rare, my Psyche! We shall collaborate. Here!

*[Running up the ladder, he tosses down a yellow hollowed
pumpkin to Goody Rickby, who catches it. Then
rummaging forth an armful of cornstalks, ears, tassels,
dried squashes, gourds, beets, etc., he descends and
throws them in a heap on the floor.]*

Whist! the anatomy.

GOODY RICKBY

[Placing the pumpkin on the shoulders.]

Look!

DICKON

O Johannes Baptista! What wouldst thou have
given for such a head! I helped Salome to cut his
off, dame, and it looked not half so appetizing on her
charger. Tut! Copernicus wore once such a pump-

kin, but it is rotten. Look at his golden smile!
Hail, Phœbus Apollo!

GOODY RICKBY

'Tis the finest scarecrow in town.

DICKON

Nay, poor soul, 'tis but a skeleton yet. He must
have a man's heart in him.

*[Picking a big red beet from among the cornstalks, he places
it under the left side of the ribs.]*

Hush! Dost thou hear it beat?

GOODY RICKBY

Thou merry rogue!

DICKON

Now for the lungs of him.

[Snatching a small pair of bellows from a peg on the wall.]

That's for eloquence! He'll preach the black knaves
a sermon on theft. And now —

*[Here, with Goody Rickby's help, he stuffs the framework
with the gourds, corn, etc., from the loft, weaving the
husks about the legs and arms.]*

here goes for digestion and inherited instincts! More
corn, Goody. Now he'll fight for his own flesh and
blood!

GOODY RICKBY

[Laughing.]

Dickon, I am proud of thee.

DICKON

Wait till you see his peruke.

[Seizing a feather duster made of crow's feathers.]

Voici ! Scalps of the enemy !

[Pulling them apart, he arranges the feathers on the pumpkin, like a gentleman's wig.]

A rare conqueror !

GOODY RICKBY

Oh, you beauty !

DICKON

And now a bit of comfort for dark days and stormy nights.

[Taking a piece of corn-cob with the kernels on it, Dickon makes a pipe, which he puts into the scarecrow's mouth.]

So ! There, Goody ! I tell thee, with yonder brand-new coat and breeches of mine — those there in my cupboard ! — we'll make him a lad to be proud of.

[Taking the clothes, which Goody Rickby brings — a pair of fine scarlet breeches and a gold-embroidered coat with ruffles of lace — he puts them upon the scarecrow. Then, eying it like a connoisseur, makes a few finishing touches.]

Why, dame, he'll be a son to thee.

GOODY RICKBY

A son ? Ay, if I had but a son !

DICKON

Why, here you have him.

[*To the scarecrow.*]

Thou wilt scare the crows off thy mother's corn-field—won't my pretty? And send 'em all over t'other side the wall—to her dear neighbour's, the Justice Gilead Merton's.

GOODY RICKBY

Justice Merton! Nay, if they'd only peck his eyes out, instead of his corn.

DICKON

[*Grinning.*]

Yet the Justice was a dear friend of "Blacksmith Bess."

GOODY RICKBY

Ay, "Blacksmith Bess!" If I hadn't had a good stout arm when he cast me off with the babe, I might have starved for all his worship cared.

DICKON

True, Bessie; 'twas a scurvy trick he played on thee—and on me, that took such pains to bring you together—to steal a young maid's heart—

GOODY RICKBY

And then toss it away like a bad penny to the gutter! And the child—to die!

[*Lifting her hammer in rage.*]

Ha ! if I could get the worshipful Justice Gilead into my power again —

[*Drops the hammer sullenly on the anvil.*]

But no ! I shall beat my life away on this anvil, whilst my justice clinks his gold, and drinks his port to a fat old age. Justice ! Ha — justice of God !

DICKON

Whist, dame ! Talk of angels and hear the rustle of their relatives.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Turning, watches outside a girl's figure approaching.*]

His niece — Rachel Merton ! What can she want so early ? Nay, I mind me ; 'tis the mirror. She's a maid after our own hearts, boy, — no Sabbath-go-to-meeting airs about *her* ! She hath read the books of the *magi* from cover to cover, and paid me good guineas for 'em, though her uncle knows naught on't. Besides, she's in love, Dickon.

DICKON

[*Indicating the scarecrow.*]

Ah ? With *him* ? Is it a rendezvous ?

GOODY RICKBY

[*With a laugh.*]

Pff ! Begone !

DICKON

[*Shakes his finger at the scarecrow.*]

Thou naughty rogue !

[*Then, still smiling slyly, with his head placed confidentially next to the scarecrow's ear, as if whispering, and with his hand pointing to the maiden outside, Dickon fades away into air. RACHEL enters, nervous and hesitant. Goody Rickby makes her a courtesy, which she acknowledges by a nod, half absent-minded.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Mistress Rachel Merton—so early! I hope your uncle, our worshipful Justice, is not ill?

RACHEL

No, my uncle is quite well. The early morning suits me best for a walk. You are—quite alone?

GOODY RICKBY

Quite alone, mistress. [*Bitterly.*] Oh, folks don't call on Goody Rickby—except on business.

RACHEL

[*Absently, looking round in the dim shop.*]

Yes—you must be busy. Is it—is it here?

GOODY RICKBY

You mean the —

RACHEL

[*Starting back, with a cry.*]

Ah! who's that?

GOODY RICKBY

[*Chuckling.*]

Fear not, mistress; 'tis nothing but a scarecrow.

I'm going to put him in my corn-field yonder. The crows are so pesky this year.

RACHEL

[*Draws her skirts away with a shiver.*]

How loathsome!

GOODY RICKBY

[*Vastly pleased.*]

He'll do!

RACHEL

Ah, here!—This is *the* mirror?

GOODY RICKBY

Yea, mistress, and a wonderful glass it is, as I told you. I wouldn't sell it to most comers, but seeing how you and Master Talbot —

RACHEL

Yes; that will do.

GOODY RICKBY

You see, if the town folks guessed what it was, well — You've heard tell of the gibbets on Salem hill? There's not many in New England like you, Mistress Rachel. You know enough to approve some miracles — outside the Scriptures.

RACHEL

You are quite sure the glass will do all you say?
It — never fails?

GOODY RICKBY

Ay, now, mistress, how could it? 'Tis the glass of truth — [*insinuatingly*] the glass of true lovers. It shows folks just as they are; no shams, no varnish. If your sweetheart be false, the glass will reveal it. If a wolf should dress himself in a white sheep's wool, this glass would reflect the black beast inside it.

RACHEL

But what of the sins of the soul, Goody? Vanity, hypocrisy, and — and inconstancy? Will it surely reveal them?

GOODY RICKBY

I have told you, my young lady. If it doth not as I say, bring it back and get your money again. Trust me, sweeting, 'tis your only mouse-trap for a man. Why, an old dame hath eyes in her heart yet. If your lover be false, this glass shall pluck his fine feathers!

RACHEL

[*With aloofness.*]

'Tis no question of that. I wish the glass to — to amuse me.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Laughing.*]

Why, then, it shall amuse you. Try it on some of your neighbours.

RACHEL

You ask a large price for it.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Shrugs.*]

I run risks. Besides, where will you get another?

RACHEL

That is true. Here, I will buy it. That is the sum you mentioned, I believe?

[*She hands a purse to Goody Rickby, who opens it and counts over some coins.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Let see; let see.

RACHEL

Well?

GOODY RICKBY

Good: 'tis good. Folks call me a witch, mistress. Well — harkee — a witch's word is as good as a justice's gold. The glass is yours — with my blessing.

RACHEL

Spare yourself that, dame. But the glass: how am I to get it? How will you send it to me — quietly?

GOODY RICKBY

Trust me for that. I've a willing lad that helps me with such errands; a neighbour o' mine.

[*Calls.*]

Ebenezer!

RACHEL.

[*Startled.*]

What! is he here?

GOODY RICKBY

In the hay-loft. The boy's an orphan; he sleeps there o' times. Ebenezer!

[A raw, dishevelled country boy appears in the loft, slides down the ladder, and shuffles up sleepily.]

THE BOY

Evenin'.

RACHEL

[Drawing Goody Rickby aside.]

You understand; I desire no comment about this purchase.

GOODY RICKBY

Nor I, mistress, be sure.

RACHEL

Is he —?

GOODY RICKBY

[Tapping her forehead significantly.]

Trust his wits who hath no wit; he's mum.

RACHEL

Oh!

THE BOY

[Gaping.]

Job?

GOODY RICKBY

Yea, rumple-head! His job this morning is to bear yonder glass to the house of Justice Merton — the big one on the hill; to the side door. Mind, no gabbing. Doth he catch?

THE BOY

[Nodding and grinning.]

'E swallows.

RACHEL

But is the boy strong enough?

GOODY RICKBY

Him?

[Pointing to the anvil.]

Ebenezer!

[The boy spits on his palms, takes hold of the anvil, lifts it, drops it again, sits on it, and grins at the door, just as Richard Talbot appears there, from outside.]

RACHEL

Gracious!

GOODY RICKBY

Trust him. He'll carry the glass for you.

RACHEL

I will return home at once, then. Let him go quietly to the side door, and wait for me.

Good morning.

[Turning, she confronts Richard.]

RICHARD

Good morning.

RACHEL

Richard!—Squire Talbot, you—you are abroad early.

RICHARD

As early as Mistress Rachel. Is it pardonable? I caught sight of you walking in this direction, so I thought it wise to follow, lest —

[*Looks hard at Goody Rickby.*]

RACHEL

Very kind. Thanks. I've done my errand. Well; we can return together.

[*To Goody Rickby.*]

You will make sure that I receive the — the article.

GOODY RICKBY

Trust me, mistress.

[*Courtesying.*]

Squire Talbot! the honour, sir!

RICHARD

[*Bluntly, looking from one to the other.*]

What article?

[*Rachel ignores the question and starts to pass out. Richard frowns at Goody Rickby, who stammers.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Begging your pardon, sir?

RICHARD

What article? I said.

[*After a short, embarrassed pause : more sternly.*]

Well?

GOODY RICKBY

Oh, the article! Yonder old glass, to be sure, sir.
A quaint piece, your honour.

RICHARD

Rachel, you haven't come here at sunrise to buy
—that thing?

RACHEL

Verily, "that thing" and at sunrise. A pretty
time for a pretty purchase. Are you coming?

RICHARD

[*In a low voice.*]

More witchcraft nonsense? Do you realize this is
serious?

RACHEL

Oh, of course. You know I am desperately mystical,
so pray let us not discuss it. Good-by.

RICHARD

Rachel, just a moment. If you want a mirror, you
shall have the prettiest one in New England. Or I
will import you one from London. Only — I beg of
you — don't buy stolen goods.

GOODY RICKBY

Stolen goods?

RACHEL

[*Aside to Richard.*]

Don't! don't!

RICHARD

At least, articles under suspicion.

[*To Goody Rickby.*]

Can you account for this mirror — how you came by it?

GOODY RICKBY

I'll show ye! I'll show ye! Stolen — ha!

RICHARD

Come, old swindler, keep your mirror, and give this lady back her money.

GOODY RICKBY

I'll damn ye both, I will! — Stolen!

RACHEL

[*Imploringly.*]

Will you come?

RICHARD

Look you, old Rickby; this is not the first time. Charm all the broomsticks in town, if you like; bewitch all the tables and saucepans and mirrors you please; but gull no more money out of young girls.

Mind you! We're not so enterprising in this town as at Salem; but — *it may come to it!* So look sharp! I'm not blind to what's going on here.

GOODY RICKBY

Not blind, Master Puritan? Oho! You can see through all my counterfeits, can ye? So! you would scrape all the wonder out'n the world, as I've scraped all the meat out'n my punkin-head yonder! Aha! wait and see! Afore sundown, I'll send ye a nut to crack, shall make your orthodox jaws ache. Your servant, Master Deuteronomy!

RICHARD

[To Rachel, who has seized his arm.]

We'll go.

[Exeunt Richard and Rachel.]

GOODY RICKBY

[Calls shrilly after them.]

Trot away, pretty team; toss your heads. I'll unhitch ye and take off your blinders.

THE SLOUCHING BOY

[Capering and grimacing in front of the mirror, shrieks with laughter.]

Ohoho!

GOODY RICKBY

[*Returning, savagely.*]

Yes, yes, my fine lover! I'll pay thee for "stolen goods" — I'll pay thee.

[*Screams.*]

Dickon! Stop laughing.

THE BOY

O Lord! O Lord!

GOODY RICKBY

What tickles thy mirth now?

THE BOY

For to think as the soul of an orphan innocent, what lives in a hay-loft, should wear horns.

[*On looking into the mirror, the spectator perceives therein that the reflection of the slouching boy is the horned demon figure of Dickon, who performs the same antics in pantomime within the glass as the boy does without.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Yea; 'tis a wise devil that knows his own face in the glass. But hark now! Thou must find me a rival for this cock-squire, — dost hear? A rival, that shall steal away the heart of his Mistress Rachel.

DICKON

And take her to church?

GOODY RICKBY

To church or to Hell. All's one.

DICKON

A rival!

[Pointing at the glass.]

How would *he* serve—in there? Dear Ebenezer! Fancy the deacons in the vestry, Goody, and her uncle, the Justice, when they saw him escorting the bride to the altar, with his tail round her waist!

GOODY RICKBY

Tut, tut! Think it over in earnest, and meantime take her the glass. Wait, we'd best fold it up small, so as not to attract notice on the road.

[Dickon, who has already drawn the curtains over the glass, grasps one side of the large frame, Goody Rickby the other.]

Now!

[Pushing their shoulders against the two sides, the frame disappears and Dickon holds in his hand a mirror about a foot square, of the same design.]

So! Be off! And mind, a rival for Richard!

DICKON

For Richard a rival,
Dear Goody Rickby
Wants Dickon's connival:
Lord! What can the trick be?

[*To the scarecrow.*]

By-by, Sonny; take care of thy mother.

[*Dickon slouches out with the glass, whistling.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Mother! Yea, if only I had a son—the Justice Merton's and mine! If the brat had but lived now to remind him of those merry days, which he has forgotten. Zooks, wouldn't I put a spoke in his wheel! But no such luck for me! No such luck!

[*As she goes to the forge, the stout figure of a man appears in the doorway behind her. Under one arm he carries a large book, in the other hand a gold-headed cane. He hesitates, embarrassed.*]

THE MAN

Permit me, Madam.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Turning.*]

Ah, him! — Justice Merton!

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Removing his hat, steps over the sill, and lays his great book on the table; then with a supercilious look, he puts his hat firmly on again.*]

Permit me, dame.

GOODY RICKBY

You!

[*With confused, affected hauteur, the Justice shifts from foot to foot, flourishing his cane. As he speaks, Goody Rickby, with a shrewd, painful expression, draws slowly backward toward the door left, which opens into an inner room. Reaching it, she opens it part way, stands facing him, and listens.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

I have had the honour — permit me — to entertain suspicions; to rise early, to follow my niece, to meet just now Squire Talbot, an excellent young gentleman of wealth, if not of fashion; to hear his remarks concerning — hem! — you, dame! to call here — permit me — to express myself and inquire —

GOODY RICKBY

Concerning your waistcoat?

[*Turning quickly, she snatches an article of apparel which hangs on the inner side of the door, and holds it up.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Starting, crimson.*]

Woman!

GOODY RICKBY

You left it behind — the last time.

JUSTICE MERTON

I have not the honour to remember —

GOODY RICKBY

The one I embroidered ?

JUSTICE MERTON

'Tis a matter —

GOODY RICKBY

Of some two and twenty years.

[Stretching out the narrow width of the waistcoat.]

Will you try it on now, dearie ?

JUSTICE MERTON

Unconscionable! Un-un-unconscionable witch!

GOODY RICKBY

Witchling — thou used to say.

JUSTICE MERTON

Pah! pah! I forget myself. Pride, permit me, goeth before a fall. As a magistrate, Rickby, I have already borne with you long! The last straw, however, breaks the camel's back.

GOODY RICKBY

Poor camel!

JUSTICE MERTON

You have soiled, you have smirched, the virgin reputation of my niece. You have inveigled her into notions of witchcraft; already the neighbours are beginning to talk. 'Tis a long lane which hath no turning, saith the Lord. Permit me — as a witch, thou art judged. Thou shalt hang.

A VOICE

[*Behind him.*]

And me too ?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Turns about and stares.*]

I beg pardon.

THE VOICE

[*In front of him.*]

Not at all.

JUSTICE MERTON

Did — did somebody speak ?

THE VOICE

Don't you recognize my voice? *Still and small,*
you know. If you will kindly let me out, we can
chat.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Turning fiercely on Goody Rickby.*]

These are thy sorceries. But I fear them not.
The righteous man walketh with God.

[*Going to the book which lies on the table.*]

Satan, I ban thee! I will read from the Holy
Scriptures!

[*Unclasping the Bible, he flings open the ponderous covers.*
— *Dickon steps forth in smoke.*]

DICKON

Thanks; it was stuffy in there.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Clasping his hands.*]

Dickon !

DICKON

[*Moving a step nearer on the table.*]

Hillo, Gilly ! Hillo, Bess !

JUSTICE MERTON

Dickon ! No ! No !

DICKON

Do ye mind Auld Lang Syne — the chorus that
night, Gilly ?

[*Sings.*]

Gil-ead, Gil-ead, Gil-ead

Merton,

He was a silly head, silly head,

Certain,

When he forgot to steal a bed-

Curtain !

Encore, now !

JUSTICE MERTON

No, no, be merciful ! I will not harm her ; she
shall not hang : I swear, I swear it !

[*Dickon disappears.*]

I swear — ah ! Is he gone ? Witchcraft ! Witch-
craft ! I have witnessed it. 'Tis proved on thee,
slut. I swear it : thou shalt hang.

[*Exit wildly.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Ay, Gilead! I shall hang *on*! Ahaha! Dickon, thou angel! Ah, Satan! Satan! For a son now!

DICKON

[*Reappearing.*]

Videlicet, in law — a bastard. · *N'est ce pas?*

GOODY RICKBY

Yea, in law and in justice, I should-a had one now. Worse luck that he died.

DICKON

One and twenty years ago?

[*Goody Rickby nods.*]

Good; he should be of age now. One and twenty — a pretty age, too, for a rival. Haha! — For arrival? — Marry, he shall arrive, then; arrive and marry and inherit his patrimony — all on his birthday! Come, to work!

GOODY RICKBY

What rant is this?

DICKON

Yet, Dickon, it pains me to perform such an anachronism. All this Mediævalism in Massachusetts! — These old-fashioned flames and alchemic accompaniments, when I've tried so hard to be a native American product; it, jars. But *che vuole*! I'm naturally middle-aged. I haven't been really myself, let me think, — since 1492!

GOODY RICKBY

What art thou mooning about?

DICKON

[Still impenetrable.]

There was my old friend in Germany, Dr. Johann Faustus; he was nigh such a bag of old rubbish when I made him over. Ain't it trite! No, you can't teach an old dog like me new tricks. Still, a scarecrow! that's decidedly local color. Come then; a Yankee masterpiece!

[Seizing Goody Rickby by the arm, and placing her before the scarecrow, he makes a bow and wave of introduction.]

Behold, madam, your son — illegitimate; the future affianced of Mistress Rachel Merton, the heir-elect, through matrimony, of Merton House, — Gilead Merton second; Lord Ravensbane! Your lordship — your mother.

GOODY RICKBY

Dickon! Can you do it?

DICKON

I can — try.

GOODY RICKBY

You will create him for me? —

[Wickedly.]

and for Gilead!

DICKON

I will — for a kiss.

GOODY RICKBY

[*About to embrace him.*]

Dickon !

DICKON

[*Dodging her.*]

Later. Now, the waistcoat.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Handing it.*]

Rare ! rare ! He shall go wooing in't — like his father.

DICKON

[*Shifting the scarecrow's gold-trimmed coat, slips on the embroidered waistcoat and replaces the coat.*]

Stand still, Jack ! So, my macaroni. *Perfecto !*
Stay — a walking-stick !

GOODY RICKBY

[*Wrenching a spoke out of an old rickety wheel.*]

Here : the spoke for Gilead. He used to take me to drive in the chaise it came out of.

DICKON

[*Placing the spoke as a cane, in the scarecrow's sleeve, views him with satisfaction.*]

Sic ! There, Jacky ! *Filius fit non nascitur.* — Sam Hill ! My Latin is stale. “In the beginning, was the—gourd !” Of these thy modest ingredients may thy spirit smack !

[*Making various mystic passes with his hands, Dickon intones, now deep and solemn, now with fanciful shrill rapidity, this incantation :*]

Flail, flip ;
Broom, sweep ;
 Sic itur !
Cornstalk
And turnip, talk !
 Turn crittur !

Pulse, beet ;
Gourd, eat ;
 Ave Hellas !
Poker and punkin,
Stir the old junk in :
 Breathe, bellows !

Corn-cob,
And crow's feather,
End the job :
Jumble the rest o' the rubbish together ;
Dovetail and tune 'em.
 E pluribus unum !

[*The scarecrow remains stock still.*]

The devil! Have I lost the hang of it? Ah!
Hullo! He's dropped his pipe. What's a dandy
without his 'baccy!

[*Restoring the corn-cob pipe to the scarecrow's mouth.*]

'Tis the life and breath of him. So; hand me yon
hazel switch, Goody.

[*Waving it.*]

Presto!

Brighten, coal,
I' the dusk between us!
Whiten, soul!
Propinquit Venus!

[*A whiff of smoke puffs from the scarecrow's pipe.*]

Sic! Sic! Jacobus!

[*Another whiff.*]

Bravo!

[*The whiffs grow more rapid and the thing trembles.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Puff! puff, manny, for thy life!

DICKON

Fiat, fœtus! — Huzza! Noch einmal! Go it!

[*Clouds of smoke issue from the pipe, half fill the shop, and envelop the creature, who staggers.**]

GOODY RICKBY

See! See his eyes!

* Here the living actor, through a trap, concealed by the smoke, will substitute himself for the elegantly clad effigy. His make-up, of course, will approximate to the latter, but the grotesque contours of his expression gradually, throughout the remainder of the act, become refined and sublimated till, at the *finale*, they are of a lordly and distinguished caste.

DICKON

[Beckoning with one finger.]

Veni, fili ! Veni ! Take 'ee first step, *bambino !* —
Toddle !

[The Scarecrow makes a stiff lurch forward and falls sideways against the anvil, propped half-reclining against which he leans rigid, emitting fainter puffs of smoke in gasps.]

GOODY RICKBY

[Screams.]

Have a care ! He's fallen.

DICKON

Well done, Punkin Jack ! Thou shalt be knighted for that !

[Striking him on the shoulder with the hazel rod.]

Rise, Lord Ravensbane !

[The Scarecrow totters to his feet, and makes a forlorn rec-tilinear salutation.]

GOODY RICKBY

Look ! He bows. — He flaps his flails at thee. He smiles like a tik-doo-loo-roo !

DICKON

[With a profound reverence, backing away.]

Will his lordship deign to follow his tutor ?

[With hitches and jerks, the Scarecrow follows Dickon.]

GOODY RICKBY

O Lord! Lord! the style o' the broomstick!

DICKON

[Holding ready a high-backed chair.]

Will his lordship be seated and rest himself?

[Awkwardly the Scarecrow half falls into the chair; his head sinks sideways, and his pipe falls out. Dickon snatches it up instantly and restores it to his mouth.]

Puff! Puff, *puer*; 'tis thy life.

[The Scarecrow puffs again.]

Is his lordship's tobacco refreshing?

GOODY RICKBY

Look now! The red colour in his cheeks. The beet-juice is pumping, oho!

DICKON

[Offering his arm.]

Your lordship will deign to receive an audience?

[The Scarecrow takes his arm and rises.]

The Marchioness of Rickby, your lady mother, entreats leave to present herself.

GOODY RICKBY

[Courtesying low.]

My son!

DICKON

*[Holding the pipe, and waving the hazel rod.]**Dicite ! Speak !**[The Scarecrow, blowing out his last mouthful of smoke, opens his mouth, gasps, gurgles, and is silent.]**In principio erat verbum ! Accost thy mother !**[The Scarecrow, clutching at his side in a struggle for coherence, fixes a pathetic look of pain on Goody Rickby.]*

THE SCARECROW

Mother !

GOODY RICKBY

[With a scream of hysterical laughter, seizes both Dickon's hands and dances him about the forge.]

O Beelzebub ! I shall die !

DICKON

Thou hast thy son.

[Dickon whispers in the Scarecrow's ear, shakes his finger, and exit.]

GOODY RICKBY

He called me "mother." Again, boy, again.

THE SCARECROW

From the bottom of my heart — mother.

GOODY RICKBY

"The bottom of his heart" — Nay, thou killest me.

THE SCARECROW

Permit me, madam !

GOODY RICKBY

Gilead ! Gilead himself ! Waistcoat, " permit me," and all : thy father over again, I tell thee.

THE SCARECROW

[*With a slight stammer.*]

It gives me — I assure you — lady — the deepest happiness.

GOODY RICKBY

Just so the old hypocrite spoke when I said I'd have him. But thou hast a sweeter deference, my son.

[*Reënter Dickon ; he is dressed all in black, save for a white stock, — a suit of plain elegance.*]

DICKON

Now, my lord, your tutor is ready.

THE SCARECROW

[*To Goody Rickby.*]

I have the honour — permit me — to wish you — good morning.

[*Bows and takes a step after Dickon, who, taking a three-cornered cocked hat from a peg, goes toward the door.*]

GOODY RICKBY

Whoa ! Whoa, Jack ! Whither away ?

DICKON

[Presenting the hat.]

Deign to reply, sir.

THE SCARECROW

I go — with my tutor — Master Dickonson — to pay my respects — to his worship — the Justice — Merton — to solicit — the hand — of his daughter — the fair Mistress — Rachel.

[With another bow.]

Permit me.

GOODY RICKBY

Permit ye? God speed ye! Thou must teach him his tricks, Dickon.

DICKON

Trust me, Goody. Between here and Justice Merton's, I will play the mother-hen, and I promise thee, our bantling shall be as stuffed with compliments as a callow chick with caterpillars.

[As he throws open the big doors, the cawing of crows is heard again.]

Hark! your lordship's retainers acclaim you on your birthday. They bid you welcome to your majority. Listen! "Long live Lord Ravensbane! Caw!"

GOODY RICKBY

Look! Count 'em, Dickon.

One for sorrow,
Two for mirth,
Three for a wedding,
Four for a birth —

Four on 'em! So! Good luck on thy birthday!
And see! There's three on 'em flying into the Justice's field.

— Flight o' the crows
Tells how the wind blows! —

A wedding! Get ye gone. Wed the girl, and sting the Justice. Bless ye, my son!

THE SCARECROW

[*With a profound reverence.*]

Mother — believe me — to be — your ladyship's — most devoted — and obedient — son.

DICKON

[*Prompting him aloud.*]

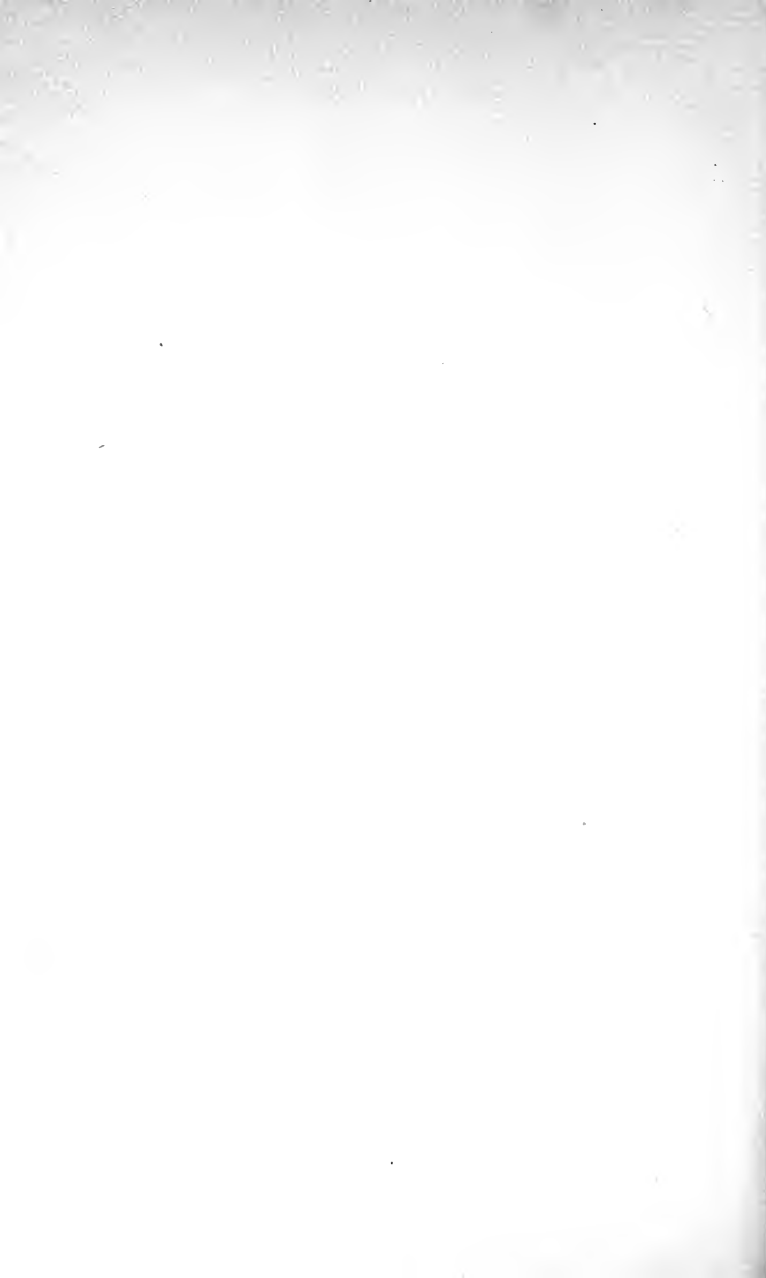
Ravensbane.

THE SCARECROW

[*Donning his hat, lifts his head in hauteur, shakes his lace ruffle over his hand, turns his shoulder, nods slightly, and speaks for the first time with complete mastery of his voice.*]

Hm! Ravensbane!

[*With one hand in the arm of Dickon, the other twirling his cane (the converted chaise-spoke), wreathed in halos of smoke from his pipe, the fantastical figure hitches elegantly forth into the daylight, amid louder acclamations of the crows.*]



ACT II

ACT II

The same morning. Justice Merton's parlour, furnished and designed in the style of the early colonial period. On the right wall, hangs a portrait of the Justice as a young man; on the left wall, an old-fashioned looking-glass. At the right of the room stands the Glass of Truth, draped—as in the blacksmith shop—with the strange, embroidered curtain.

In front of it are discovered RACHEL and RICHARD; Rachel is about to draw the curtain.

RACHEL

Now! Are you willing?

RICHARD

So you suspect me of dark, villainous practices?

RACHEL

No, no, foolish Dick.

RICHARD

Still, I am to be tested; is that it?

RACHEL

That's it.

RICHARD

As your true lover.

RACHEL

Well, yes.

RICHARD

Why, of course, then, I consent. A true lover always consents to the follies of his lady-love.

RACHEL

Thank you, Dick; I trust the glass will sustain your character. Now; when I draw the curtain —

RICHARD

[Staying her hand.]

What if I be false?

RACHEL

Then, sir, the glass will reflect you as the subtle fox that you are.

RICHARD

And you — as the goose?

RACHEL

Very likely. Ah! but, Richard dear, we mustn't laugh. It may prove very serious. You do not guess — you do not dream all the mysteries —

RICHARD

[Shaking his head, with a grave smile.]

You pluck at too many mysteries; sometime they may burn your fingers. Remember our first mother Eve!

RACHEL

But this is the glass of truth; and Goody Rickby told me —

RICHARD

Rickby, forsooth!

RACHEL

Nay, come; let's have it over.

[She draws the curtain, covers her eyes, steps back by Richard's side, looks at the glass, and gives a joyous cry.]

Ah! there you are, dear! There we are, both of us — just as we have always seemed to each other, true. 'Tis proved. Isn't it wonderful?

RICHARD

Miraculous! That a mirror bought in a blacksmith shop, before sunrise, for twenty pounds, should prove to be actually — a mirror!

RACHEL

Richard, I'm so happy.

[Enter JUSTICE MERTON and MISTRESS MERTON.]

RICHARD

[Embracing her.]

Happy, art thou, sweet goose? Why, then, God bless Goody Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON

Strange words from you, Squire Talbot.

[Rachel and Richard part quickly; Rachel draws the curtain over the mirror; Richard stands stiffly.]

RICHARD

Justice Merton! Why, sir, the old witch is more innocent, perhaps, than I represented her.

JUSTICE MERTON

A witch, believe me, is never innocent.

[Taking their hands, he brings them together and kisses Rachel on the forehead.]

Permit me, young lovers. I was once young myself, young and amorous.

MISTRESS MERTON

[In a low voice.]

Verily!

JUSTICE MERTON

My fair niece, my worthy young man, beware of witchcraft.

MISTRESS MERTON

And Goody Rickby, too, brother?

JUSTICE MERTON

That woman shall answer for her deeds. She is proscribed.

RACHEL

Proscribed? What is that?

MISTRESS MERTON

[Examining the mirror.]

What is this?

JUSTICE MERTON

She shall hang.

RACHEL

Uncle, no! Not merely because of my purchase this morning.

JUSTICE MERTON

Your purchase?

MISTRESS MERTON

[Pointing to the mirror.]

That, I suppose.

JUSTICE MERTON

What! you purchased that mirror of her? You brought it here?

RACHEL

No, the boy brought it; I found it here when I returned.

JUSTICE MERTON

What! From her! You purchased it? From her shop? From her infamous den, into my parlour!

[To Mistress Merton.]

Call the servant.

[Himself calling.]

Micah! This instant, this instant — away with it!
Micah!

RACHEL

Uncle Gilead, I bought —

JUSTICE MERTON

Micah, I say! Where is the man?

RACHEL

Listen, Uncle. I bought it with my own money.

JUSTICE MERTON

Thine own money! Wilt have the neighbours gossip? Wilt have me, thyself, my house, suspected of complicity with witches?

[*Enter* MICAH.]

Micah, take this away.

MICAH

Yes, sir; but, sir —

JUSTICE MERTON

Out of my house!

MICAH

There be visitors.

JUSTICE MERTON

Away with —

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Touching his arm.*]

Gilead!

MICAH

Visitors, sir; gentry.

JUSTICE MERTON

Ah!

MICAH

Shall I show them in, sir?

JUSTICE MERTON

Visitors! In the morning? Who are they?

MICAH

Strangers, sir. I should judge they be very high gentry; lords, sir.

ALL

Lords!

MICAH

At least, one on 'em, sir. The other—the dark gentleman—told me they left their horses at the inn, sir.

MISTRESS MERTON

Hark!

[The faces of all wear suddenly a startled expression.]

Where is that unearthly sound?

JUSTICE MERTON

[Listening.]

Is it in the cellar?

MICAH

'Tis just the dog howling, madam. When he spied the gentry he turned tail and run below.

MISTRESS MERTON

Oh, the dog!

JUSTICE MERTON

Show the gentlemen here, Micah. Don't keep them waiting.

[*Exit* MICAH.]

A lord!

[*To Rachel.*]

We shall talk of this matter later. — A lord!

[*Turning to the small glass on the wall, he arranges his peruke and attire.*]

RACHEL

[*To Richard.*]

What a fortunate interruption! But, dear Dick! I wish we needn't meet these strangers now.

RICHARD

Would you really rather we were alone together?

[*They chat aside, absorbed in each other.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

Think of it, Cynthia, a lord!

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Dusting the furniture hastily with her handkerchief.*]

And such dust!

RACHEL

[*To Richard.*]

You know, dear, we need only be introduced, and then we can steal away together.

[*Reënter* MICAH.]

MICAHA

[*Announcing.*]

Lord Ravensbane: Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova ; Master Dickonson.

[*Enter RAVENSBANE and DICKON.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

Gentlemen, permit me, you are excessively welcome. I am deeply gratified to meet —

DICKON

Lord Ravensbane, of the Rookeries, Somersetshire.

JUSTICE MERTON

Lord Ravensbane — his lordship's most truly honoured.

RAVENSBANE

Truly honoured.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Turning to Dickon.*]

His lordship's — ?

DICKON

Tutor.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Checking his effusiveness.*]

Ah, so !

DICKON

Justice Merton, I believe.

JUSTICE MERTON

Of Merton House. — May I present — permit me, your lordship — my sister, Mistress Merton.

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Merton.

JUSTICE MERTON

And my — and my —

[*Under his breath.*]

Rachel !

[*Rachel remains with a bored expression behind Richard.*]

— my young neighbour, Squire Talbot, Squire Richard Talbot of — of —

RICHARD

Of nowhere, sir.

RAVENSBANE

[*Nods.*]

Nowhere.

JUSTICE MERTON

And permit me, Lord Ravensbane, my niece — Mistress Rachel Merton.

RAVENSBANE

[*Bows low.*]

Mistress Rachel Merton.

RACHEL

[*Courtesies.*]

Lord Ravensbane.

*[As they raise their heads, their eyes meet and are fascinated.
Dickon just then takes Ravensbane's pipe and fills it.]*

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel!

RACHEL

Your lordship!

[Dickon returns the pipe.]

MISTRESS MERTON

A pipe! Gilead! — in the parlour!

[Justice Merton frowns silence.]

JUSTICE MERTON

Your lordship — ahem! — has just arrived in town?

DICKON

From London, via New Amsterdam.

RICHARD

[Aside.]

Is he staring at *you*? Are you ill, Rachel?

RACHEL

[Indifferently.]

What?

JUSTICE MERTON

Lord Ravensbane honours my humble roof.

DICKON

[Touches Ravensbane's arm.]

Your lordship — “roof.”

RAVENSBANE

[Starting, turns to Merton.]

Nay, sir, the roof of my father's oldest friend bestows generous hospitality upon his only son.

JUSTICE MERTON

Only son — ah, yes! Your father —

RAVENSBANE

My father, I trust, sir, has never forgotten the intimate companionship, the touching devotion, the unceasing solicitude for his happiness which you, sir, manifested to him in the days of his youth.

JUSTICE MERTON

Really, your lordship, the—the slight favours which—hem! some years ago, I was privileged to show your illustrious father—

RAVENSBANE

Permit me!—Because, however, of his present infirmities—for I regret to say that my father is suffering a temporary aberration of mind—

JUSTICE MERTON

You distress me!

RAVENSBANE

My lady mother has charged me with a double mission here in New England. On my quitting my home, sir, to explore the wideness and the mystery of this world, my mother bade me be sure to call upon his worship, the Justice Merton; and deliver to him, first, my father's remembrances; and secondly, my mother's epistle.

DICKON

[Handing to Justice Merton a sealed document.]

Her ladyship's letter, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON

[Examining the seal with awe, speaks aside to Mistress Merton.]

Cynthia! — a crested seal!

DICKON

His lordship's crest, sir: rooks rampant.

JUSTICE MERTON

[Embarrassed, breaks the seal.]

Permit me.

RACHEL

[Looking at Ravensbane.]

Have you noticed his bearing, Richard: what personal distinction! what inbred nobility! Every inch a true lord!

RICHARD

He may be a lord, my dear, but he walks like a broomstick.

RACHEL

How dare you !

[Turns abruptly away ; as she does so, a fold of her gown catches in a chair.]

DICKON

[To Justice Merton.]

A word, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON

[Glancing up from the letter.]

I am astonished — overpowered !

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel — permit me.

[Stooping, he extricates the fold of her gown.]

RACHEL

Oh, thank you.

[They go aside together.]

RICHARD

[To Mistress Merton.]

So Lord Ravensbane and his family are old friends of yours ?

MISTRESS MERTON

[Monosyllabically.]

I never heard the name before, Richard.

RICHARD

Why! but I thought that your brother, the Justice —

MISTRESS MERTON

The Justice is reticent.

RICHARD

Ah!

MISTRESS MERTON

Especially concerning his youth.

RICHARD

Ah!

RAVENSBANE

[To Rachel, taking her hand after a whisper from Dickon.]

Believe me, sweet lady, it will give me the deepest pleasure.

RACHEL

Can you really tell fortunes?

RAVENSBANE

More than that; I can bestow them.

JUSTICE MERTON

[To Dickon.]

But is her ladyship really serious? An offer of marriage!

DICKON

Pray read it again, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Reads.*]

"To the Worshipful, the Justice Gilead Merton,
"Merton House.

"My Honourable Friend and Benefactor :

"With these brief lines I commend to you our
son " — *our* son !

DICKON

She speaks likewise for his young lordship's
father, sir.

JUSTICE MERTON

Ah ! of course.

[*Reads.*]

"In a strange land, I intrust him to you as to a
father." Honoured, believe me ! "I have only to
add my earnest hope that the natural gifts, graces,
and inherited fortune " — ah — !

DICKON

Twenty thousand pounds — on his father's demise.

JUSTICE MERTON

Ah ! — "fortune of this young scion of nobility will
so propitiate the heart of your niece, Mistress Rachel
Merton, as to cause her to accept his proffered hand
in matrimony ; " — but — but — but Squire Talbot is
betrothed to — well, well, we shall see ; — "in matri-
mony, and thus cement the early bonds of interest
and affection between your honoured self and his

lordship's father ; not to mention, dear sir, your worship's ever grateful and obedient admirer,

“ELIZABETH,

“Marchioness of R.”

Of R. ! of R. ! Will you believe me, my dear sir, so long is it since my travels in England—I visited at so many—hem ! noble estates—permit me, it is so awkward, but —

DICKON

[*With his peculiar intonation of Act I.*]

Not at all.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Starting.*]

I—I confess, sir, my youthful memory fails me. Will you be so very obliging; this—this Marchioness of R. —?

DICKON

[*Enjoying his discomfiture.*]

Yes?

JUSTICE MERTON

The R, I presume, stands for —

DICKON

Rickby.

RAVENSBANE

[*Calls.*]

Dickon, my pipe !

[*Dickon glides away to fill Ravensbane's pipe.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Stands bewildered and horror-struck.*]Great God! — Thou inexorable Judge!

RICHARD

4th ed. 1107 *stin* → [To Mistress Merton, scowling at Ravensbane and Rachel.]

Are these court manners, in London?

MISTRESS MERTON

Don't ask *me*, Richard.

RAVENSBANE

[*Dejectedly to Rachel, as Dickon is refilling his pipe.*]

Alas! Mistress Rachel is cruel.

RACHEL

I? — cruel, your lordship?

RAVENSBANE

Your own white hand has written it.

[*Lifting her palm.*]

See, these lines: Rejection! you will reject one who loves you dearly.

RACHEL

Fie, your lordship! Be not cast down at fortune-telling. Let me tell yours, may I?

RAVENSBANE

[*Rapturously holding his palm for her to examine.*]

Ah! Permit me.

JUSTICE MERTON

[Murmurs, in terrible agitation.]

Dickon! Can it be Dickon?

RACHEL

Why, Lord Ravensbane, your pulse. Really, if I am cruel, you are quite heartless. I declare I can't feel your heart beat at all.

RAVENSBANE

Ah! mistress, that is because I have just lost it.

RACHEL

[Archly.]

Where?

RAVENSBANE

[Faintly.]

Dickon, my pipe!

RACHEL

Alas! my lord, are you ill?

DICKON

[Restoring the lighted pipe to Ravensbane, speaks aside.]

Pardon me, sweet young lady, I must confide to you that his lordship's heart is peculiarly responsive to his emotions. When he feels very ardently, it quite stops. Hence the use of his pipe.

RACHEL

Oh! Is smoking, then, necessary for his heart?

DICKON

Absolutely—to equilibrate the valvular palpitations. Without his pipe—should his lordship experience, for instance, the emotion of love—he might die.

RACHEL

You alarm me!

DICKON

But this is for you only, Mistress Rachel. We may confide in you?

RACHEL

Oh, utterly, sir.

DICKON

His lordship, you know, is so sensitive.

RAVENSBANE

[*To Rachel.*]

You have given it back to me. Why did not you keep it?

RACHEL

What, my lord?

RAVENSBANE

My heart.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*To Dickon.*]

Permit me, one moment; I did not catch your name.

DICKON

My name? Dickonson.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*With a gasp of relief.*]

Ah, Dickonson! Thank you. I mistook the word.

DICKON

A compound, your worship.

[*With a malignant smile.*]

Dickon-

[*Then jerking his thumb over his shoulder at Ravensbane.*]

son!

[*Bowing.*]

Both at your service.

JUSTICE MERTON

If — if you can show pity — speak low.

DICKON

As hell, your worship?

JUSTICE MERTON

Is he — he there?

DICKON

Bessie's brat; yes; it didn't die, after all, poor suckling! Dickon weaned it. Saved it for balm of Gilead. Raised it for joyful home-coming. Prodigal's return! Twenty-first birthday! Happy son! Happy father!

JUSTICE MERTON

My — son!

DICKON

Felicitations!

JUSTICE MERTON

I will not believe it.

DICKON

Truth *is* hard fare.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Faintly.*]

What — what do you want?

DICKON

Only the happiness of your dear ones.

[*Indicating Rachel and Ravensbane.*]

The union of these young hearts and hands.

JUSTICE MERTON

What! he will dare — an illegitimate —

DICKON

Fie, fie, Gilly! Why, the brat is a lord now.

JUSTICE MERTON

Oh, the disgrace! Spare me that, Dickon.

RICHARD

[*In a low voice to Rachel, who is talking in a fascinated manner to Ravensbane.*]

Are you mad?

RACHEL

[*Indifferently.*]

What is the matter?

[*Laughing, to Ravensbane.*]

Oh, your lordship is too witty!

JUSTICE MERTON

[*To Dickon.*]

After all, I was young then.

DICKON

Quite so.

JUSTICE MERTON

And she is innocent; she is already betrothed.

DICKON

Twiddle-twaddle! Look at her eyes now!

[*Rachel is still telling Ravensbane's fortune; and they are manifestly absorbed in each other.*]

'Tis a brilliant match; besides, her ladyship's heart is set upon it.

JUSTICE MERTON

Her ladyship—?

DICKON

The Marchioness of Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Glowering.*]

I had forgotten.

DICKON

Her ladyship has never forgotten. So, you see, your worship's alternatives are most simple. Alternative one: advance his lordship's suit with your niece as speedily as possible, and save all scandal. Alternative two: impede his lordship's suit, and —

JUSTICE MERTON

Don't, Dickon! don't reveal the truth; not disgrace now!

DICKON

Good; we are agreed, then?

JUSTICE MERTON

I have no choice.

DICKON

[*Cheerfully.*]

Why, true; we ignored that, didn't we?

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Approaching.*]

This young lord — Why, Gilead, are you ill?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*With a great effort, commands himself.*]

Not in the least.

MISTRESS MERTON

Rachel's deportment, my dear brother —

RACHEL

I am really at a loss. Your lordship's hand is so very peculiar.

RAVENSBANE

Ah! Peculiar.

RACHEL

This, now, is the line of life.

RAVENSBANE

Of life, yes?

RACHEL

But it begins so abruptly, and see! it breaks off and ends nowhere. And just so here with this line — the line of — of love.

RAVENSBANE

Of love. So; it breaks?

RACHEL

Yes.

RAVENSBANE

Ah, then, that must be the *heart* line.

RACHEL

I am afraid your lordship is very fickle.

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Horrified.*]

I tell you, Gilead, they are fortune-telling!

JUSTICE MERTON

Tush! Tush!

MISTRESS MERTON

Tush? "*Tush*" to me? Tush!

[*Richard, who has been stifling his feelings at Rachel's rebuff, and has stood fidgeting at a civil distance from her, now walks up to Justice Merton.*]

RICHARD

Intolerable! Do you approve of *this*, sir? Are Lord Ravensbane's credentials satisfactory?

JUSTICE MERTON

Eminently, eminently.

RICHARD

Ah! So her ladyship's letter is —

JUSTICE MERTON

Charming; charming.

RICHARD

To be sure; old friends, when they are lords, it makes such a difference.

DICKON

True friends — old friends;
New friends — cold friends.

N'est ce pas, your worship?

JUSTICE MERTON

Indeed, Master Dickonson; indeed!

[*To Richard, as Dickon goes toward Ravensbane and Rachel.*]

What happiness to encounter the manners of the nobility!

RICHARD

If you approve them, sir, it is sufficient. This is your house.

[*He turns away.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

Your lordship will, I trust, make my house your home.

RAVENSBANE

My home, sir.

RACHEL

[*To Dickon, who has spoken to her.*]

Really?

[*To Justice Merton.*]

Why, uncle, what is this Master Dickonson tells us?

JUSTICE MERTON

What! What! he has revealed —

RACHEL

Yes, indeed. Why did you never tell us?

JUSTICE MERTON

Rachel! Rachel!

MISTRESS MERTON

You are moved, brother.

RACHEL

[Laughingly to Ravensbane.]

My uncle is doubtless astonished to find you so grown.

RAVENSBANE

[Laughingly to Justice Merton.]

I am doubtless astonished, sir, to be so grown.

JUSTICE MERTON

[To Dickon.]

You have —

DICKON

Remarked, sir, that your worship had often dandled his lordship — as an infant.

JUSTICE MERTON

[Smiling lugubriously.]

Quite so — as an infant merely.

RACHEL

How interesting! Then you must have seen his lordship's home in England.

JUSTICE MERTON

As you say.

RACHEL

[To Ravensbane.]

Do describe it to us. We are so isolated here from the grand world. Do you know, I always

imagine England to be an enchanted isle, like one of the old Hesperides, teeming with fruits of solid gold.

RAVENSBANE

Ah, yes! my mother raises them.

RACHEL

Fruits of gold?

RAVENSBANE

Round like the rising sun. She calls them — ah! punkins.

MISTRESS MERTON

“Punkins!”

JUSTICE MERTON

[Aside, grinding his teeth.]

Scoundrel! Scoundrel!

RACHEL

[Laughing.]

Your lordship pokes fun at us.

DICKON

His lordship is an artist in words, mistress. I have noticed that in whatever country he is travelling, he tinges his vocabulary with the local idiom. His lordship means, of course, not pumpkins, but pomegranates.

RACHEL

We forgive him. But, your lordship, please be serious and describe to us your hall.

RAVENSBANE

Quite serious: the hall. Yes, yes; in the middle burns a great fire — on a black — ah! — black altar. ✓

DICKON

A Druidical heirloom. His lordship's mother collects antiques. ✓

RACHEL

How fascinating!

RAVENSBANE

Quite fascinating! On the walls hang pieces of iron.

DICKON

Trophies of Saxon warfare.

RAVENSBANE

And rusty horseshoes.

GENERAL MURMURS

Horseshoes!

DICKON

Presents from the German emperor. They were worn by the steeds of Charlemagne.

RAVENSBANE

Quite so; and broken cart-wheels.

DICKON

Reliques of British chariots.

RACHEL

How mediæval it must be!

[*To Justice Merton.*]

And to think you never described it to us!

MISTRESS MERTON

True, brother; you have been singularly reticent.

JUSTICE MERTON

Permit me; it is impossible to report all one sees on one's travels.

MISTRESS MERTON

Evidently.

RACHEL

But surely your lordship's mother has other diversions besides collecting antiques. I have heard that in England ladies followed the hounds; and sometimes —

[*Looking at her aunt and lowering her voice.*]

they even dance.

RAVENSBANE

Dance — ah, yes; my lady mother dances about the — the altar; she swings high a hammer.

DICKON

Your lordship, your lordship! Pray, sir, check this vein of poetry. Lord Ravensbane symbolizes as a hammer and altar a golf-stick and tee — a Scottish

game, which her ladyship plays on her Highland estates.

RICHARD

[*To Mistress Merton.*]

What do you think of this?

MISTRESS MERTON

[*With a scandalized look toward her brother.*]

He said to me "tush."

RICHARD

[*To Justice Merton, indicating Dickon.*]

Who is this magpie?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Hisses in fury.*]

Satan!

RICHARD

I beg pardon!

JUSTICE MERTON

Satan, sir — makes you jealous.

RICHARD

[*Bows stiffly.*]

Good morning.

[*Walking up to Ravensbane.*]

Lord Ravensbane, I have a rustic colonial question to ask. Is it the latest fashion to smoke incessantly in ladies' parlours, or is it — mediæval?

DICKON

His lordship's health, sir, necessitates —

RICHARD

I addressed his lordship.

RAVENSBANE

In the matter of fashions, sir —

[Hands his pipe to be refilled.]

My pipe, Dickon!

[While Dickon holds his pipe — somewhat longer than usual — Ravensbane, with his mouth open as if about to speak, relapses into a vacant stare.]

DICKON

[As he lights the pipe for Ravensbane, speaks suavely and low as if not to be overheard by him.]

Pardon me. The fact is, my young pupil is sensitive; the wound from his latest duel is not quite healed; you observe a slight lameness, an occasional absence of mind.

RACHEL

A wound — in a real duel?

RICHARD

Necessitates his smoking! A valid reason!

DICKON

[Aside.]

You, mistress, know the *true* reason — his lordship's heart.

RACHEL

Believe me, sir —

RICHARD

[To Ravensbane, who is still staring vacantly into space.]

Well, well, your lordship.

[Ravensbane pays no attention.]

You were saying — ?

[Dickon returns the pipe.]

in the matter of fashions, sir — ?

RAVENSBANE

[Regaining slowly a look of intelligence, draws himself up with affronted hauteur.]

Permit me !

*[Puffs several wreaths of smoke into the air.]*I *am* the fashions.

RICHARD

[Going.]

Insufferable !

[He pauses at the door.]

MISTRESS MERTON

[To Justice Merton.]

Well — what do you think of that?

JUSTICE MERTON

Spoken like King Charles himself.

MISTRESS MERTON

Brother ! brother ! is there nothing wrong here ?

JUSTICE MERTON

Wrong, Cynthia! Manifestly you are quite ignorant of the manners of the great.

MISTRESS MERTON

Oh, Gilead!

JUSTICE MERTON

Where are you going?

MISTRESS MERTON

To my room.

[Murmurs, as she hurries out.]

Dear! dear! if it should be that again!

[Dickon and Justice Merton withdraw to a corner of the room.]

RACHEL

[To Ravensbane.]

I—object to the smoke? Why, I think it is charming.

RICHARD

[Who has returned from the door, speaks in a low, constrained voice.]

Rachel!

RACHEL

Oh!—you?

RICHARD

You take quickly to European fashions.

RACHEL

Yes? To what one in particular?

RICHARD

Two; smoking and flirtation.

RACHEL

Jealous?

RICHARD

Of an idiot? I hope not. Manners differ, however. Your confidences to his lordship have evidently not included — your relation to me.

RACHEL

Oh, our relations!

RICHARD

Of course, since you wish him to continue in ignorance —

RACHEL

Not at all. He shall know at once. Lord Ravensbane!

RAVENSBANE

Fair mistress!

RICHARD

Rachel, stop! I did not mean —

RACHEL

[*To Ravensbane.*]

My uncle did not introduce to you with sufficient elaboration this gentleman. Will you allow me to do so now?

RAVENSBANE

I adore Mistress Rachel's elaborations.

RACHEL

Lord Ravensbane, I beg to present Squire Talbot,
my betrothed.

RAVENSBANE

Betrothed! Is it —

[*Noticing Richard's frown.*]

is it pleasant?

RACHEL

[*To Richard.*]

Are you satisfied?

RICHARD

[*Trembling with feeling.*]

More than satisfied.

[*Exit.*]

RAVENSBANE

[*Looking after him.*]

Ah! Betrothed is *not* pleasant.

RACHEL

Not always.

RAVENSBANE

[*Anxiously.*]

Mistress Rachel is not pleased?

RACHEL

[*Biting her lip, looks after Richard.*]

With him.

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel will smile again?

RACHEL

Soon.

RAVENSBANE

[*Ardent.*]

Ah! if she would only smile once more! What can Lord Ravensbane do to make her smile? See! will you puff my pipe? It is very pleasant.

[*Offering the pipe.*]

RACHEL

[*Smiling.*]

Shall I try?

[*Takes hold of it mischievously.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*In a great voice.*]

Rachel!

RACHEL

Why, uncle!

JUSTICE MERTON

[*From where he has been conversing in a corner with Dickon, approaches now and speaks suavely to Ravensbane.*]

Permit me, your lordship—Rachel, you will kindly withdraw for a few moments; I desire to confer with Lord Ravensbane concerning his mother's—her ladyship's letter;

[*Obsequiously to Dickon.*]

— that is, if you think, sir, that your noble pupil is not too fatigued.

DICKON

Not at all; I think his lordship will listen to you with much pleasure.

RAVENSBAKE

[*Bowing to Justice Merton, but looking at Rachel.*]

With much pleasure.

DICKON

And in the meantime, if Mistress Rachel will allow me, I will assist her in writing those invitations which your worship desires to send in her name.

JUSTICE MERTON

Invitations — from my niece ?

DICKON

To his Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor; to your friends, the Reverend Masters at Harvard College, etc., etc.; in brief, to all your worship's select social acquaintance in the vicinity — to meet his lordship. It was so thoughtful in you to suggest it, sir, and believe me, his lordship appreciates your courtesy in arranging the reception in his honour for this afternoon.

RACHEL

[*To Justice Merton.*]

This afternoon! Are we really to give his lordship a reception this afternoon?

DICKON

Your uncle has already given me the list of guests ; so considerate ! Permit me to act as your scribe, Mistress Rachel.

RACHEL

With pleasure.

[*To Justice Merton.*]

And will it be here, uncle ?

DICKON

[*Looking at him narrowly.*]

Your worship said *here*, I believe ?

JUSTICE MERTON

Quite so, sir ; quite so, quite so.

DICKON

[*Aside to Justice Merton.*]

I advise nothing rash, Gilly ; the brat has a weak heart.

RACHEL

This way, Master Dickonson, to the study.

DICKON

[*As he goes with Rachel.*]

I will write and you sign ?

RACHEL

Thank you.

DICKON

[Aside, as he passes Ravensbane.]

Remember, Jack! Puff, puff!

RACHEL

[To Ravensbane, who stretches out his hand to her with a gesture of entreaty to stay.]

Your lordship is to be my guest.

[Courtesying.]

Till we meet again!

DICKON

[To Rachel.]

May I sharpen your quill?

[Exeunt.]

RAVENSBANE

[Faintly, looking after her.]

Till — we — meet — again!

JUSTICE MERTON

[Low and vehement to Ravensbane.]

Impostor!

RAVENSBANE

[Still staring at the door.]

She is gone.

JUSTICE MERTON

You at least shall not play the lord and master to my face.

RAVENSBANE

Quite — gone !

JUSTICE MERTON

I know with whom I have to deal. If I be any judge of my own flesh and blood — permit me — you shall quail before me.

RAVENSBANE

[Dejectedly.]

She did not smile —

[Joyously.]

She smiled !

JUSTICE MERTON

Affected rogue ! I know thee. I know thy feigned pauses, thy assumed vagaries. Speak ; how much do you want ?

RAVENSBANE

Betrothed, — he went away. That was good. And then — she did not smile : that was not good. But then — she smiled ! Ah ! that was good.

JUSTICE MERTON

Come back, coward, and face me.

RAVENSBANE

First, the great sun shone over the corn-fields, the grass was green ; the black wings rose and flew before me ; then the door opened — and she looked at me.

JUSTICE MERTON

Speak, I say ! What sum ? What treasure do you hope to bleed from me ?

RAVENSBANE

[*Ecstatically.*]

Ah! Mistress Rachel!

JUSTICE MERTON

Her! Scoundrel, if thou dost name her again, my innocent — my sweet maid! If thou dost — thou godless spawn of temptation — mark you, I will put an end —

[*Reaching for a pistol that rests in a rack on the wall, — the intervening form of Dickon suddenly appears, pockets the pistol, and exit.*]

DICKON

I beg pardon; I forgot something.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Sinking into a chair.*]

God is just.

[*He holds his head in his hands and weeps.*]

RAVENSBANE

[*For the first time, since Rachel's departure, observes Merton.*]

Permit me, sir, are you ill?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Recoiling.*]

What art thou?

RAVENSBANE

[*Monotonously.*]

I am Lord Ravensbane: Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and —

JUSTICE MERTON

And my son !

[*Covers his face again.*]

RAVENSBANE

[*Solicitously.*]

Shall I call Dickon ?

JUSTICE MERTON

Yea, for thou art my son. The deed once done is never done, the past is the present.

RAVENSBANE

[*Walking softly toward the door, calls.*]

Dickon !

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Starting up.*]

No, do not call him. Stay, and be merciful. Tell me : I hate thee not ; thou wast innocent. Tell me ! — I thought thou hadst died as a babe. — Where has Dickon, our tyrant, kept thee these twenty years ?

RAVENSBANE

[*With gentle courtesy.*]

Master Dickonson is my tutor.

JUSTICE MERTON

And why has thy mother — Ah, I know well ; I deserve all. But yet, it must not be published now ! I am a justice now, an honoured citizen — and my

young niece — Thy mother will not demand so much ; she will be considerate ; she will ask some gold, of course, but she will show pity !

RAVENSBANE

My mother is the Marchioness of Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON

Yes, yes ; 'twas well planned, a clever trick. 'Twas skilful of her. But surely thy mother gave thee commands to —

RAVENSBANE

My mother gave me her blessing.

JUSTICE MERTON

Ah, 'tis well then. Young man, my son, I too will give thee my blessing, if thou wilt but go — go instantly — go with half my fortune, go away forever, and leave my reputation unstained.

RAVENSBANE

Go away?

[Starting for the study door.]

Ah, sir, with much pleasure.

JUSTICE MERTON

You will go? You will leave me my honour — and my Rachel?

RAVENSBANE

Rachel? Rachel is yours? No, no, Mistress Rachel is mine. We are ours.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Pleadingly.*]

Consider the disgrace.

RAVENSBANE

No, no ; I have seen her eyes, they are mine ; I have seen her smiles, they are mine ; she is mine !

JUSTICE MERTON

Consider, one moment consider — you, an illegitimate — and she — oh, think what thou art !

RAVENSBANE

[*Monotonously, puffing smoke at the end.*]

I am Lord Ravensbane : Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count —

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Wrenching the pipe from Ravensbane's hand and lips.*]

Devil's child ! Boor ! Buffoon !

[*Flinging the pipe away.*]

I will stand thy insults no longer. If thou hast no heart —

RAVENSBANE

[*Putting his hand to his side, staggers.*]

Ah ! my heart !

JUSTICE MERTON

Hypocrite ! Thou canst not fool me. I am thy father.

RAVENSBANE

[*Faintly, stretching out his hand to him for support.*]

Father!

JUSTICE MERTON

Stand away. Thou mayst break thy heart and mine and the devil's, but thou shalt not break Rachel's.

RAVENSBANE

[*Faintly.*]

Mistress Rachel is mine —

[*He staggers again, and falls, half reclining, upon a chair.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

Good God! Can it be — his heart?

RAVENSBANE

[*More faintly, beginning to change expression.*]

Her eyes are mine; her smiles are mine.

[*His eyes close.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*With agitated swiftness, feels and listens at Ravensbane's side.*]

Not a motion; not a sound! Yea, God, Thou art good! 'Tis his heart. He is — ah! he is my son. Judge Almighty, if he should die now; may I not be still a moment more and make sure. No, no, my son — he is changing.

[*Calls.*]

Help! Help! Rachel! Master Dickonson! Help!
Richard! Cynthia! Come hither!

[*Enter Dickon and Rachel.*]

RACHEL

Uncle!

JUSTICE MERTON

Bring wine. Lord Ravensbane has fainted.

RACHEL

Oh!

[*Turning swiftly to go.*]

Micah, wine.

DICKON

[*Detaining her.*]

Stay! His pipe! Where is his lordship's pipe?

RACHEL

Oh, terrible!

[*Enter, at different doors, Mistress Merton and Richard.*]

MISTRESS MERTON

What's the matter?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*To Rachel.*]

He threw it away. He is worse. Bring the wine.

MISTRESS MERTON

Look! How strange he appears!

RACHEL

[Searching distractedly.]

The pipe! His lordship's pipe! It is lost, Master Dickonson.

DICKON

[Stooping, as if searching, with his back turned, having picked up the pipe, is filling and lighting it.]

It must be found. This is a heart attack, my friends; his lordship's life depends on the nicotine.

[Deftly he places the pipe in Rachel's way.]

RACHEL

Thank God! Here it is.

[Carrying it to the prostrate form of Ravensbane, she lifts his head and is about to put the pipe in his mouth.]

Shall I — shall I put it in?

RICHARD

No! not you.

RACHEL

Sir!

RICHARD

Let his tutor perform that office.

RACHEL

[Lifting Lord Ravensbane's head again.]

Here, my lord.

RICHARD AND JUSTICE MERTON

[*Together.*]

Rachel!

RACHEL

You, too, uncle?

DICKON

Pardon me, Mistress Rachel; give the pipe at once. Only a token of true affection can revive his lordship now.

RICHARD

[*As Rachel puts the pipe to Ravensbane's lips.*]

I forbid it, Rachel.

RACHEL

[*Watching only Ravensbane.*]

My lord — my lord!

MISTRESS MERTON

Give him air; unbutton his coat.

[*Rachel unbuttons Ravensbane's coat, revealing the embroidered waistcoat.*]

Ah, heavens! What do I see?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Looks, blanches, and signs silence to Mistress Merton.*]

Cynthia!

DICKON

See! He puffs—he revives. He is coming to himself.

MISTRESS MERTON

[Aside to Justice Merton, with deep tensity.]

That waistcoat! that waistcoat! Brother, hast thou never seen it before?

JUSTICE MERTON

Never, my sister.

RACHEL

[As Ravensbane rises to his feet.]

At last!

DICKON

Look! he is restored.

RACHEL

God be thanked!

DICKON

My lord, Mistress Rachel has saved your life.

RAVENSBANE

[Taking Rachel's hand.]

Mistress Rachel is mine; we are ours.

RICHARD

Dare to repeat that.

RAVENSBANE

[Looking at Rachel.]

Her eyes are mine.

RICHARD

[Flinging his glove in his face.]

And that, sir, is yours. I believe such is the

proper fashion in England. If your lordship's last duelling wound is sufficiently healed, perhaps you will deign a reply.

RACHEL

Richard ! Your lordship !

RAVENSBANE

[Stoops, picks up the glove, pockets it, bows to Rachel, and steps close to Richard.]

Permit me !

[He blows a puff of smoke full in Richard's face.]

ACT III



ACT III

The same day. Late afternoon. The same scene as Act II.

RAVENSBANE and DICKON discovered at table, on which are lying two flails. Ravensbane is dressed in a costume which, composed of silk and jewels, subtly approximates in design to that of his original grosser composition. So artfully, however, is this contrived that, to one ignorant of his origin, his dress would appear to be merely an odd personal whimsey; whereas, to one initiated, it would stamp him grotesquely as the apotheosis of scarecrows.

Dickon is sitting in a pedagogical attitude; Ravensbane stands near him, making a profound bow in the opposite direction.

RAVENSBANE

Believe me, ladies, with the true sincerity of the heart.

DICKON

Inflection a little more lachrymose, please: "The true sincerity of the heart."

RAVENSBANE

Believe me, ladies, with the true sincerity of the heart.

DICKON

Prettily, prettily! Next!

RAVENSBANE

[*Changing his mien, as if addressing another person.*]

Verily, sir, as that prince of poets, the immortal Virgil, has remarked :

“Adeo in teneris consuescere multum est.”

DICKON

Hm ! Act up to the sentiment.

RAVENSBANE

Verily, sir, as that prince —

DICKON

No, no ; *basta !* The next.

RAVENSBANE

[*With another change to courtly manner.*]

Trust me, your Excellency, I will inform his Majesty of your courtesy.

DICKON

His Majesty more emphatic. Remember ! You must impress all of the guests this afternoon.

RAVENSBANE

His Majesty of your courtesy.

DICKON

Delicious ! O thou exquisite flower of love ! How thy natal composites have burst in bloom : The pump-

kin in thee to a golden collarette; thy mop of crow's wings to these raven locks; thy broomstick to a lordly limp; thy corn-silk to these pale-tinted tassels. Verily in the gallery of scarecrows, thou art the Apollo Belvedere! But continue, Cobby dear: the retort now to the challenge.

RAVENSBANE

[*With a superb air.*]

The second, I believe.

DICKON

Quite so, my lord.

RAVENSBANE

Sir! The local person whom you represent has done himself the honour of submitting to me a challenge to mortal combat. Sir! Since the remotest times of my feudal ancestors, in such affairs of honour, choice of weapons has ever been the prerogative of the challenged. Sir! This right of etiquette must be observed. Nevertheless, believe me, I have no selfish desire that my superior attainments in this art should assume advantage over my challenger's ignorance. I have, therefore, chosen those combative utensils most appropriate both to his own humble origin and to local tradition. Permit me, sir, to reveal my choice.

[*Pointing grandly to the table.*]

There are my weapons!

DICKON

[*Clapping his hands.*]

My darling *homunculus*! Thou shouldst have acted in Beaumont and Fletcher!

RAVENSBANE

There are my weapons!

DICKON

I could watch thy histrionics till midnight. But thou art tired, poor Jacky; two hours' rehearsal is fatiguing to your lordship.

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel — I may see her now?

DICKON

Romeo! Romeo! Was ever such an amorous puppet show!

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel!

DICKON

Wait; let me think! Thou art wound up now, my pretty apparatus, for at least six and thirty hours. The wooden angel Gabriel that trumpets the hours on the big clock in Venice is not a more punctual manikin than thou with my speeches. Thou shouldst run, therefore, —

RAVENSBANE

[Frowning darkly at Dickon.]

Stop talking; permit me! A tutor should know his place.

DICKON

[Rubbing his hands.]

Nay, your lordship is beyond comparison.

RAVENSBANE

[In a terrible voice.]

She will come? I shall see her?

[Enter MICAH.]

MICAH

Pardon, my lord.

RAVENSBANE

[Turning joyfully to Micah.]

Is it she?

MICAH

Captain Bugby, my lord, the Governor's secretary.

DICKON

Good. Squire Talbot's second. Show him in.

RAVENSBANE

[Flinging despairingly into a chair.]

Ah! ah!

MICAH

[Lifting the flails from the table.]

Beg pardon, sir ; shall I remove —

DICKON

Drop them ; go.

MICAH

But, sir —

DICKON

Go, thou slave !

[Exit Micah.]

RAVENSBANE

[In childlike despair.]

She will not come ! I shall not see her !

DICKON

[Handing him a book.]

Here, my lord ; read. You must be found reading.

RAVENSBANE

[Flinging the book into the fireplace.]

She does not come !

DICKON

Fie, fie, Jack ; thou must not be breaking thy Dickon's apron-strings with a will of thine own. Come !

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel.

DICKON

Be good, boy, and thou shalt see her soon.

RAVENSBANE

[Brightening.]

I shall see her?

[Enter CAPTAIN BUGBY.]

DICKON

Your lordship was saying — Oh! Captain Bugby?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[Nervous and awed.]

Captain Bugby, sir, ah! at Lord Ravensbane's service — ah!

DICKON

I am Master Dickonson, his lordship's tutor.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Happy, sir.

DICKON

[To Ravensbane.]

My lord, this gentleman waits upon you from Squire Talbot.

[To Captain Bugby.]

In regard to the challenge of this morning, I presume?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

The affair, ah! the affair of this morning, sir.

RAVENSBANE

[*With his former superb air — to Captain Bugby.*]

The second, I believe?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Quite so, my lord.

RAVENSBANE

Sir! the local person whom you represent has done himself the honour of submitting to me a challenge to mortal combat. Sir! Since the remotest times of my feudal ancestors, in such affairs of honour, choice of weapons has ever been the prerogative of the challenged. Sir! this right of etiquette must be observed.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Indeed, yes, my lord.

DICKON

Pray do not interrupt.

[*To Ravensbane.*]

Your lordship: "observed."

RAVENSBANE

— observed. Nevertheless, believe me, I have no selfish desire that my superior attainments in this art should assume advantage over my challenger's ignorance. I have, therefore, chosen those combative utensils most appropriate both to his own humble

origin and to local tradition. Permit me, sir, to reveal my choice.

[*Pointing to the table.*]

There are my weapons!

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Looking, bewildered.*]

These, my lord?

RAVENSBANE

Those.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

But these are — are flails.

RAVENSBANE

Flails.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Flails, my lord?

RAVENSBANE

There are my weapons.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Lord Ravensbane — I — ah! express myself ill —
Do I understand that your lordship and Squire
Talbot —

RAVENSBANE

Exactly.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

But your lordship — flails!

RAVENSBANE

My adversary should be deft in their use. He has doubtless wielded them frequently on his barn floor.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Ahaha! I understand now. Your lordship — ah! is a wit. Haha! Flails!

DICKON

His lordship's satire is poignant.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Indeed, sir, so keen that I must apologize for laughing at my principal's expense.

[*Soberly to Ravensbane.*]

My lord, if you will deign to speak one moment seriously —

RAVENSBANE

Seriously?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

I will take pleasure in informing Squire Talbot — ah! as to your *real* preference for —

RAVENSBANE

For flails, sir. I have, permit me, nothing further to say. Flails are final.

[*Turns away haughtily.*]

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Must I really report to Squire Talbot — ah! — flails?

DICKON

Lord Ravensbane's will is inflexible.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

And his wit, sir, incomparable. I am sorry for the Squire, but 'twill be the greatest joke in years. Ah! will you tell me — is it —

[*Indicating Ravensbane's smoking.*]

is it the latest fashion?

DICKON

Lord Ravensbane is always the latest.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Obliged servant, sir. Aha! Such a joke as — O lord! flails!

[*Exit.*]

DICKON

[*Returning to Ravensbane.*]

Bravo, my pumpky dear! That squelches the jealous betrothed. Now nothing remains but for you to continue to dazzle the enamoured Rachel, and so present yourself to the Justice as a pseudo-son-nephew-in-law.

RAVENSBANE

I may go to Mistress Rachel?

DICKON

She will come to you. She is reading now a poem from you, which I left on her dressing-table.

RAVENSBANE

She is reading a poem from me?

DICKON

With your pardon, my lord, I penned it for you. I am something of a poetaster. Indeed, I flatter myself that I have dictated some of the finest lines in literature.

RAVENSBANE

Dickon! She will come?

DICKON

She comes!

[*Enter RACHEL, reading from a piece of paper.*]

Hush! Step aside; step aside first. Let her read it.

[*Dickon draws Ravensbane back.*]

RACHEL

Once more,

[*Reads.*]

“To Mistress R——, enchantress:

If faith in witchcraft be a sin,
Alas! what peril he is in
Who plights his faith and love in thee,
Sweetest maid of sorcery.

If witchcraft be a whirling brain,
A roving eye, a heart of pain,
Whose wound no thread of fate can stitch,
How hast thou conjured, cruel witch,

With the brain, eye, heart, and total mortal residue
of thine enamoured

JACK LANTHORNE,
[LORD R——.""]

DICKON

Now to leave the turtles alone.

[*Exit.*]

RACHEL

"To Mistress R——, enchantress:

If faith in witchcraft be —"

"To Mistress R——." R! It *must* be. R——
must mean —

RAVENSBANE

[*With passionate deference.*]

Rachel!

RACHEL

Ah! How you surprised me, my lord.

RAVENSBANE

You are come again; you are come again.

RACHEL

Has anything happened? Tell me, my lord. Has
Squire Talbot been here?

RAVENSBANE

No, Mistress Rachel; not here.

RACHEL

And you have not — Oh, my lord, I have been in such terror. But you are safe. — You have not fought?

RAVENSBANE

No, Mistress Rachel; not fought.

RACHEL

Thank God for that! But you will promise me — promise me that there shall be — no — duel!

RAVENSBANE

I promise Mistress Rachel there shall be no duel.

RACHEL

Your lordship is so good. You do not know how gratefully happy I am.

RAVENSBANE

I know I am only a thing to make Mistress Rachel happy. Ah! look at me once more. When you look at me, I live.

RACHEL

It is strange indeed, my lord, how the familiar world, the daylight, the heavens themselves have changed since your arrival.

RAVENSBANE

This is the world; this is the light; this is the heavens themselves. Mistress Rachel is looking at me.

RACHEL

For me, it is less strange perhaps. I never saw a real lord before. But you, my lord, must have seen so many, many girls in the great world.

RAVENSBANE

No, no; never.

RACHEL

No other girls before to-day, my lord!

RAVENSBANE

Before to-day? I do not know; I do not care. I was not here. To-day I was born—in your eyes. Ah! my brain whirls!

RACHEL

[*Smiling.*]

“If witchcraft be a whirling brain,
A roving eye, a heart of pain, —”

[*In a whisper.*]

My lord, do you really believe in witchcraft?

RAVENSBANE

With all my heart.

RACHEL

And approve of it?

RAVENSBANE

With all my soul.

RACHEL

So do I — that is, innocent witchcraft; not to harm anybody, you know, but just to feel all the

dark mystery and the trembling excitement—the way you feel when you blow out your candle all alone in your bedroom and watch the little smoke fade away in the moonshine.

RAVENSBANE

Fade away in the moonshine!

RACHEL

Oh, but we mustn't speak of it. In a town like this, all such mysticism is considered damnable. But your lordship understands and approves? I am so glad! Have you read the "Philosophical Considerations" of Glanville, the "*Saducismus Triumphatus*," and the "Presignifications of Dreams"? What kind of witchcraft, my lord, do you believe in?

RAVENSBANE

In all yours.

RACHEL

Nay, your lordship must not take me for a real witch. I can only tell fortunes, you know—like this morning.

RAVENSBANE

I know; you told how my heart would break.

RACHEL

Oh, that's palmistry, and that isn't always certain. But the surest way to prophesy—do you know what it is?

RAVENSBANE

Tell me.

RACHEL

To count the crows. Do you know how?

One for sorrow —

RAVENSBANE

Ha, yes! — Two for mirth!

RACHEL

Three for a wedding —

RAVENSBANE

Four for a birth —

RACHEL

And five for the happiest thing on earth!

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel, come! Let us go and count five crows.

RACHEL

[*Delightedly.*]

Why, my lord, how did *you* ever learn it? I got it from an old goody here in town — a real witch-wife. If you will promise not to tell a secret, I will show you. — But you must promise!

RAVENSBANE

I promise.

RACHEL

Come, then. I will show you a real piece of witchcraft that I bought from her this morning — the glass of truth. There! Behind that curtain. If

you look in, you will see — But come; I will show you.

[They put their hands on the cords of the curtain.]

Just pull that string, and — ah!

DICKON

[Stepping out through the curtain.]

Your pipe, my lord?

RACHEL

Master Dickonson, how you frightened me!

DICKON

So excessively sorry! I was observing the portrait of your uncle. I believe you were showing his lordship —

RACHEL

[Turning hurriedly away.]

Oh, nothing; nothing at all.

RAVENSBANE

[Sternly to Dickon.]

Why do you come?

DICKON

[Handing back Ravensbane's pipe filled.]

Allow me.

[Aside.]

'Tis high time you came to the point, Jack; 'tis

near your lordship's reception. Woo and win, boy ; woo and win.

RAVENSBANE

[*Haughtily.*]

Leave me.

DICKON

Your lordship's humble, very humble.

[*Exit.*]

RACHEL

[*Shivering.*]

Oh ! he is gone. My dear lord, why do you keep this man ?

RAVENSBANE

I — keep this man ?

RACHEL

I cannot — pardon my rudeness — I cannot endure him.

RAVENSBANE

You do not like him ? Ah, then, I do not like him also. We will send him away — you and I.

RACHEL

You, my lord, of course ; but I —

RAVENSBANE

You will be Dickon ! You will be with me always and light my pipe. And I will live for you, and fight for you, and kill your betrothed !

RACHEL

[*Drawing away.*]

No, no!

RAVENSBANE

Ah! but your eyes say "yes." Mistress Rachel leaves me; but Rachel in her eyes remains. Is it not so?

RACHEL

What can I say, my lord! It is true that since my eyes met yours, a new passion has entered into my soul. I have felt — your lordship will laugh at me — I have felt an inexpressible longing — but 'tis so impertinent, my lord, so absurd in me, a mere girl, and you a nobleman of power — yet I have felt it irresistibly, my dear lord, — a longing to help you. I am so sorry for you — so sorry for you! I pity you deeply. — Forgive me; forgive me, my lord!

RAVENSBANE

It is enough.

RACHEL

Indeed, indeed, 'tis so rude of me, — 'tis so unreasonable.

RAVENSBANE

It is enough. I grow — I grow — I grow! I am a plant; you give it rain and sun. I am a flower; you give it light and dew; I am a soul, you give it love and speech. I grow. Towards you — towards you I grow!

RACHEL

My lord, I do not understand it, how so poor and

mere a girl as I can have helped you. Yet I do believe it is so; for I feel it so. What can I do for you?

RAVENSBANE

Do not leave me. Be mine. Let me be yours.

RACHEL

Ah! but, my lord — do I love you?

RAVENSBANE

What is “I love you”? Is it a kiss, a sigh, an embrace? Ah! then, you do not love me. — “I love you”: is it to nourish, to nestle, to lift up, to smile upon, to make greater — a worm? Ah! then, you love me.

[*Enter RICHARD at left back, unobserved.*]

RACHEL

Do not speak so of yourself, my lord; nor exalt me so falsely.

RAVENSBANE

Be mine.

RACHEL

A great glory has descended upon this day.

RAVENSBANE

Be mine.

RACHEL

Could I but be sure that this glory is love — Oh, then!

[*Turns toward Ravensbane.*]

RICHARD

[Stepping between them.]

It is *not* love; it is witchcraft.

RACHEL

Who are you? — Richard?

RICHARD

You have indeed forgotten me? Would to God, Rachel, I could forget you.

RAVENSBANE

Sir, permit me —

RICHARD

Silence!

[To Rachel.]

Against my will, I am a convert to your own mysticism; for nothing less than damnable illusion could so instantly wean your heart from me to — this. I do not pretend to understand it; but that it is witchcraft I am convinced; and I will save you from it.

RACHEL

Go; please go.

RAVENSBANE

Permit me, sir; you have not replied yet to flails!

RICHARD

Permit *me*, sir.

[Taking something from his coat.]

My answer is — bare cob!

[Holding out a shelled corn-cob.]

Thresh this, sir, for your antagonist. 'Tis the only one worthy your lordship.

[Tosses it contemptuously towards him.]

RAVENSBANE

Upon my honour, as a man —

RICHARD

As a *man* forsooth! Were you indeed a man, Lord Ravensbane, I would have accepted your weapons, and flailed you out of New England. But it is not my custom to chastise runagates from asylums, or to banter further words with a natural and a ninny.

RACHEL

Squire Talbot! Will you leave my uncle's house?

RAVENSBANE

One moment, mistress : — I did not wholly catch the import of this gentleman's speech, but I fancy I have insulted him by my reply to his challenge. One insult may perhaps be remedied by another. Sir, permit me to call *you* a ninny, and to offer you —

[Drawing his sword and offering it.]
swords.

RICHARD

Thanks; I reject the offer.

RAVENSBANE

[Turning away despondently.]

He rejects it. Well!

RACHEL

[*To Richard.*]

And *now* will you leave?

RICHARD

At once. But one word more. Rachel — Rachel, have you forgotten this morning and the glass of truth?

RACHEL

[*Coldly.*]

No.

RICHARD

Call it a fancy now if you will. I scoffed at it; yes. Yet *you* believed it. I loved you truly, you said. Well, have I changed?

RACHEL

Yes.

RICHARD

Will you test me again — in the glass?

RACHEL

No. Go; leave us.

RICHARD

I will go. I have still a word with your aunt.

RAVENSBANE

[*To Richard.*]

I beg your pardon, sir. You said just now that had I been a man —

RICHARD

I say, Lord Ravensbane, that the straight fibre of a true man never warps the love of a woman. As for yourself, you have my contempt and pity. Pray to God, sir, pray to God to make you a man.

[*Exit, right.*]

RACHEL

Oh! it is intolerable!

[*To Ravensbane.*]

My dear lord, I do believe in my heart that I love you, and if so, I will with gratitude be your wife. But, my lord, strange glammers, strange darknesses reel, and bewilder my mind. I must be alone; I must think and decide. Will you give me this tassel?

RAVENSBANE

[*Unfastening a silk tassel from his coat and giving it to her.*]

Oh, take it.

RACHEL

If I decide that I love you, that I will be your wife—I will wear it this afternoon at the reception. Good-by.

[*Exit, right.*]

RAVENSBANE

Mistress Rachel!—

[*Solus.*]

God, are you here? Dear God, I pray to you —
make me to be a man!

[*Exit, left.*]

DICKON

[*Appearing in the centre of the room.*]

Poor Jacky! Thou shouldst 'a' prayed to t'other
one.

[*He disappears.* (*Enter, right, RICHARD and MISTRESS
MERTON.*)]

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Pointing to the wall.*]

That is the portrait.

RICHARD

Indeed! The design is very like.

MISTRESS MERTON

'Tis more than like, Richard; 'tis the very same.
Two and twenty years ago she embroidered it for
him, and he would insist on wearing it for the por-
trait he was then sitting for.

RICHARD

That same Goody Rickby!

MISTRESS MERTON

A pretty girl!—and a wild young man was my
brother. The truth comes hard to tell thee, Richard;

but he was wild, Gilead was wild. He told me the babe had died. But God worketh His own righteousness. Only—he must be saved now; Rachel must be saved; we must all be saved.

RICHARD

You feel sure—very sure, Mistress Merton?

MISTRESS MERTON

Yea, that waistcoat; 'tis the very one, I know it too well. And you see it accounts for all,—this silly impostor lord; my brother's strange patronage of him; the blackmail of this Master Dickonson—

RICHARD

But who is *he*?

MISTRESS MERTON

Nay, heaven knows! Some old crony perchance of Gilead's youth; some confederate of this woman Rickby.

RICHARD

O God!— And Rachel sacrificed to these impostors; to an illegitimate—your brother would allow it!

MISTRESS MERTON

Ah! but think of his own reputation, Richard. He a justice—the family honour!

RICHARD

'Tis enough. Well, and I must see this Goody Rickby, you think?

MISTRESS MERTON

At once — at once. My brother has invited guests for this afternoon to meet "his lordship"! Return, if possible, before they come. She dwells at the blacksmith shop — you must buy her off. Oh, gold will buy her; 'tis the gold they're after — all of them; have her recall both these persons.

[*Giving a purse.*]

Take her that, Richard, and promise her more.

RICHARD

[*Proudly.*]

Keep it, Mistress Merton. I have enough gold, methinks, for my future wife's honour; or if not, I will earn it.

[*Exit.*]

MISTRESS MERTON

Richard! Ah, the dear lad, he should have taken it.

[*Enter MICAH.*]

MICAH

The minister and his wife have turned into the gate, madam.

MISTRESS MERTON

The guests! Is it so late?

MICAH

Four o'clock, madam.

[*Going to the table.*]

Shall I remove these?

MISTRESS MERTON

Flails! Flails in the parlour? Of course, remove them.

MICAHA

[*At the door.*]

Madam, in all my past years of service at Merton House, I never waited upon a lord till to-day. Madam, in all my future years of service at Merton House, I trust I may never wait upon a lord again.

MISTRESS MERTON

Micah, mind the knocker.

MICAHA

Yes, madam.

[*Exit at left back. Sounds of a brass knocker outside.*]

MISTRESS MERTON

Rachel! Rachel!

[*Exit, right. Enter, left, JUSTICE MERTON and DICKON.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

So you are contented with nothing less than the sacrifice of my niece?

DICKON

Such a delightful room!

JUSTICE MERTON

Are you merciless?

DICKON

And such a living portrait of your worship! The waistcoat is so beautifully executed.

JUSTICE MERTON

If I pay him ten thousand pounds —

[*Enter* MICAH.]

MICAH

Minister Dodge, your worship; and Mistress Dodge.

[*Exit. Enter the* MINISTER *and his* WIFE.]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Stepping forward to receive them.*]

Believe me, this is a great privilege. — Madam!

[*Bowing.*]

MINISTER DODGE

[*Taking his hand.*]

The privilege is ours, Justice; to enter a righteous man's house is to stand, as it were, on God's threshold.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Nervously.*]

Amen, amen. Permit me — ah! Lord Ravensbane, my young guest of honour, will be here directly — permit me to present his lordship's tutor, Master

Dickonson; The Reverend Master Dodge, Mistress Dodge.

MINISTER DODGE

[*Offering his hand.*]

Master Dickonson, sir —

DICKON

[*Barely touching the minister's fingers, bows charmingly to his wife.*]

Madam, of all professions in the world, your husband's most allures me.

MISTRESS DODGE

'Tis a worthy one, sir.

DICKON

Ah! Mistress Dodge, and so arduous — especially for a minister's wife.

[*He leads her to a chair.*]

MISTRESS DODGE

[*Accepting the chair.*]

Thank you.

MINISTER DODGE

Lord Ravensbane comes from abroad?

JUSTICE MERTON

From London.

MINISTER DODGE

An old friend of yours, I understand.

JUSTICE MERTON

From London, yes. Did I say from London?
Quite so; from London.

[*Enter MICAH.*]

MICAH

Captain Bugby, the Governor's secretary.

[*Exit. Enter CAPTAIN BUGBY. He walks with a slight lameness, and holds daintily in his hand a pipe, from which he puffs with dandy deliberation.*]

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Justice Merton, your very humble servant.

JUSTICE MERTON

Believe me, Captain Bugby.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Profusely.*]

Ah, Master Dickonson! my dear friend Master Dickonson — this is indeed — ah! How is his lordship since — aha! but discretion! Mistress Dodge — her servant! Ah! yes,

[*Indicating his pipe with a smile of satisfaction.*]

the latest, I assure you; the very latest from London. Ask Master Dickonson.

MINISTER DODGE

[*Looking at Captain Bugby.*]

These will hatch out in the springtime.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Confidentially to Dickon.*]

But really, my good friend, may not I venture to inquire how his lordship — ah! has been in health since the — ah! since —

DICKON

[*Impressively.*]

Oh! quite, quite!

[*Enter MISTRESS MERTON; she joins Justice Merton and Minister Dodge.*]

CAPTAIN BUGBY

You know, I informed Squire Talbot of his lordship's epigrammatic retort — his retort of — shh! ha haha! Oh, that reply was a stiletto; 'twas sharper than a sword-thrust, I assure you. To have conceived it — 'twas inspiration; but to have expressed it — oh! 'twas genius. Hush! "Flails!" Oh! It sticks me now in the ribs. I shall die with concealing it.

MINISTER DODGE

[*To Mistress Merton.*]

'Tis true, mistress; but if there were more like your brother in the parish, the conscience of the community would be clearer.

[*Enter MICAH.*]

MICAHA

The Reverend Master Rand of Harvard College;
the Reverend Master Todd of Harvard College.

[*Exit. Enter two elderly, straight-backed divines.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Greeting them.*]

Permit me, gentlemen; this is fortunate — before
your return to Cambridge.

[*He conducts them to Mistress Merton and Minister Dodge,
centre. Seated left, Dickon is ingratiating himself
with Mistress Dodge; Captain Bugby, laughed at by
both parties, is received by neither.*]

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Puffing smoke toward the ceiling.*]

Really, I cannot understand what keeps his Ex-
cellency, the Lieutenant Governor, so long. He has
two such charming daughters, Master Dickonson —

DICKON

[*To Mistress Dodge.*]

Yes, yes; such suspicious women with their charms
are an insult to the virtuous ladies of the parish.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

How, sir!

MISTRESS DODGE

And to think that she should actually shoe horses
herself!

DICKON

It is too hard, dear Mistress Dodge; too hard!

MISTRESS DODGE

You are so appreciative, Master Dickonson.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Piqued, walks another way.*]

Well!

REV. MASTER RAND

[*To Justice Merton.*]

It would not be countenanced in the college yard, sir.

REV. MASTER TODD

A pipe! Nay, *mores inhibita*!

JUSTICE MERTON

'Tis most unfortunate, gentlemen; but I understand 'tis the new vogue in London.

[*Enter MICAH.*]

MICAH

His Excellency, Sir Charles Reddington, Lieutenant Governor; the Mistress Reddingtons.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

At last!

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Aside.*]

Micah.

[*Micah goes to her. Enter SIR CHARLES, MISTRESS REDDINGTON, and AMELIA REDDINGTON.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

Your Excellency, this is indeed a distinguished honour.

SIR CHARLES

[Shaking hands.]

Fine weather, Merton. Where's your young lord?

THE TWO GIRLS

[Courtesying.]

Justice Merton, Mistress Merton.

MICAH

[To Mistress Merton, as he is going out, right.]

I will speak to them, madam.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Oh, my dear Mistress Reddington! Charming Mistress Amelia! You are so very late, but you shall hear — hush!

MISTRESS REDDINGTON

[Noticing his pipe.]

Why, what is this, Captain?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Oh, the latest, I assure you, the very latest. Wait till you see his lordship.

AMELIA

What ! isn't he here ?

[*Laughing.*]

La, Captain ! Do look at the man !

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Oh, he's coming directly. Quite the mode — what ? Ah ! but, ladies, you shall hear.

[*He talks to them aside, where they titter.*]

SIR CHARLES

[*To Dickon.*]

What say ? Travelling for his health ?

DICKON

Partially, your Excellency ; but my young pupil and master is a singularly affectionate nature.

THE TWO GIRLS

[*To Captain Bugby.*]

What ! flails — really !

[*They burst into laughter among themselves.*]

DICKON

He has journeyed here to Massachusetts peculiarly to pay this visit to Justice Merton — his father's dearest friend.

SIR CHARLES

Ah ! knew him abroad, eh ?

DICKON

In Rome, your Excellency.

MISTRESS DODGE

[*To Justice Merton.*]

Why, I thought it was in London.

JUSTICE MERTON

London, true, quite so; we made a trip together to Lisbon — ah! Rome.

DICKON

Paris, was it not, sir?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*In great distress.*]

Paris, Paris, very true; I am — I am — sometimes I am —

[*Enter MICAH, right.*]

MICAH

[*Announces.*]

Lord Ravensbane.

[*Enter right, RAVENSBANE with RACHEL.*]

JUSTICE MERTON

[*With a gasp of relief.*]

Ah! his lordship is arrived.

[*Murmurs of "his lordship" and a flutter among the girls and Captain Bugby.*]

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Look! — Now!

JUSTICE MERTON

Welcome, my lord!

[*To Sir Charles.*]

Permit me, your Excellency, to introduce —

RAVENSBANE

Permit me; Mistress Rachel will introduce —

RACHEL

[*Courtesying.*]

Sir Charles, allow me to present my friend, Lord Ravensbane.

MISTRESS REDDINGTON

[*Aside to Amelia.*]

Her *friend* — did you hear?

SIR CHARLES

Mistress Rachel, I see you are as pretty as ever. Lord Ravensbane, your hand, sir.

RAVENSBANE

Trust me, your Excellency, I will inform his Majesty of your courtesy.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

[*Watching Ravensbane with chagrin.*]

On my life! he's lost his limp.

RAVENSBANE

[Apart to Rachel.]

"A great glory has descended upon this day."

RACHEL

[Shyly.]

My lord!

RAVENSBANE

Be sure — O mistress, be sure — that this glory is love.

SIR CHARLES

[Watching the two, whispers a loud aside to Justice Merton.]

Hoho! is it congratulations for your niece?

JUSTICE MERTON

Not — not precisely.

DICKON

[Aside to Justice Merton.]

Why so, Gilly?

SIR CHARLES

My daughters, Fanny and Amelia — Lord Ravensbane.

THE TWO GIRLS

[Courtesying.]

Your lordship!

SIR CHARLES

Good girls, but silly.

THE TWO GIRLS

Papa!

RAVENSBANE

Believe me, ladies, with the *true* sincerity of the heart.

MISTRESS REDDINGTON

Isn't he perfection !

CAPTAIN BUGBY

What said I ?

AMELIA

[*Giggling.*]

I can't help thinking of flails.

MISTRESS REDDINGTON

Poor Squire Talbot ! We must be nice to him now.

AMELIA

Oh, especially *now* !

RAVENSBANE

[*Whom Rachel continues to introduce to the guests ; to Master Rand.*]

Verily, sir, as that prince of poets, the immortal Virgil, has remarked :

“Adeo in teneris consuescere multum est.”

DICKON

Just a word, your worship.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Going with him.*]

Intolerable !

REV. MASTER TODD

His lordship is evidently a university man.

REV. MASTER RAND

Evidently most accomplished.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Aside to Dickon.*]

A song! Why, it is beyond all bounds of custom and decorum.

DICKON

Believe me, there is no such flatterer to win the maiden heart as music.

JUSTICE MERTON

And here; in this presence! Never!

DICKON

Nevertheless, it will amuse me vastly, and you will announce it.

RAVENSBANE

[*To Minister Dodge.*]

My opinion is simple: In such matters of church government, I am inclined toward the leniency of that excellent master, the Rev. John Wise, rather than the righteous obduracy of the Rev. Cotton Mather.

MINISTER DODGE

Why, there, sir, I agree with you.

[*Aside to his wife.*]

How extremely well informed!

MISTRESS DODGE

And so young, too!

JUSTICE MERTON

[*With hesitant embarrassment, which he seeks to conceal.*]

Your Excellency and friends, I have great pleasure in announcing his lordship's condescension in consenting to regale our present company—with a song.

SEVERAL VOICES

[*In various degrees of amazement and curiosity.*]

A song!

MISTRESS MERTON

Gilead! What is this?

JUSTICE MERTON

The selection is a German ballad—a particular favourite at the court of Prussia, where his lordship last rendered it. His tutor has made a translation which is entitled: "The Prognostication of the Crows," and I am requested to remind you that in the ancient heathen mythology of Germany, the crow or raven, was the fateful bird of the God Woden.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

How prodigiously novel !

MINISTER DODGE

[*Frowning.*]

Unparalleled !

SIR CHARLES

A ballad ! Come now, that sounds like old England again. Let's have it. Will his lordship sing without music ?

JUSTICE MERTON

Master Dickonson, hem ! has been — persuaded — to accompany his lordship on the virginals.

AMELIA

How delightful !

REV. MASTER RAND

[*Aside to Todd.*]

Shall we remain ?

REV. MASTER TODD

We must.

RAVENSBANE

[*To Rachel.*]

My tassel, dear mistress ; you do not wear it ?

RACHEL

My heart still wavers, my lord. But whilst you sing, I will decide.

RAVENSBANE

Whilst I sing? My fate, then, is waiting at the
end of a song?

RACHEL

At the end of a song.

DICKON

[*Touches Ravensbane's arm.*]

Your lordship.

RAVENSBANE

[*Starting, turns to the company.*]

Permit me.

[*Dickon sits, facing left, at the virginals. At first, his fingers in playing give sound only to the soft tinkling notes of that ancient instrument; but gradually, strange notes and harmonies of an ærial orchestra mingle with, and at length drown, the virginals. The final chorus is produced solely by fantastic symphonic cawings, as of countless crows, in harsh but musical accord. During the song Richard enters. Dickon's music, however, does not cease but fills the intervals between the verses. To his accompaniment, amid the whispered and gradually increasing wonder, resentment, and dismay of the assembled guests, Ravensbane, with his eyes fixed upon Rachel, sings.*]

Baron von Rabenstod arose ;

(The golden sun was rising)

Before him flew a flock of crows :

Sing heigh ! Sing heigh ! Sing heigh ! Sing —

"Ill speed, ill speed thee, baron-wight ;
 Ill speed thy palfrey pawing !
 Blithe is the morn but black the night
 That hears a raven's cawing."

[*Chorus.*]

Caw ! Caw ! Caw !

MISTRESS DODGE

[*Whispers to her husband.*]

Did you hear them ?

MINISTER DODGE

Hush !

AMELIA

[*Sotto voce.*]

What *can* it be ?

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Oh, the latest, be sure.

DICKON

You note, my friends, the accompanying harmonics ;
 they are an intrinsic part of the ballad, and may not
 be omitted.

RAVESNBANE

[*Sings.*]

The baron reckèd not a pin ;
 (For the golden sun was rising)
 He rode to woo, he rode to win ;
 Sing heigh ! Sing heigh ! Sing heigh ! Sing —

He rode into his prince's hall
Through knights and damsels flow'ry :
"Thy daughter, prince, I bid thee call ;
I claim her hand and dowry."

[*Enter Richard. Mistress Merton seizes his arm nervously.*]

MISTRESS MERTON

[*Aside.*]

Well ?

RICHARD

Gold will not buy her. She defies us.

SIR CHARLES

[*To Captain Bugby.*]

This gentleman's playing is rather ventriloquistical.

CAPTAIN BUGBY

Quite, as it were.

REV. MASTER TODD

This smells unholy.

REV. MASTER RAND

[*To Todd.*]

Shall we leave ?

JUSTICE MERTON

[*Sternly to Richard, who has attempted to talk with him
aside.*]

Not now.

RICHARD

Pardon me — it *must* be now.

JUSTICE MERTON

Squire Talbot —

RICHARD

[*Very low.*]

Sir — I come from Goody Rickby.

JUSTICE MERTON

Hush!

[*They go apart.*]

RAVENSBANE

[*Sings.*]

“What cock is this, with crest so high,
That crows with such a pothor?”

“Baron von Rabenstod am I;
Methinks we know each other.”

“Now welcome, welcome, dear guest of mine,
So long why didst thou tarry?
Now, for the sake of auld lang syne,
My daughter thou shalt marry.”

JUSTICE MERTON

[*To Richard.*]

Spare me, I am helpless.

RICHARD

What! you will sacrifice her?

JUSTICE MERTON

What can I do?

RICHARD

Tell her the truth at least.

JUSTICE MERTON

Never, Richard, no, no, never that!

AMELIA

[*To Bugby.*]

And he kept right on smoking!

MINISTER DODGE

[*Who, with Rand and Todd, has risen uneasily.*]

This smacks of witchcraft.

REV. MASTER RAND

The Justice seems moved.

RAVENSBANE

[*Sings.*]

The bride is brought, the priest as well ;

(The golden sun was passing)

They stood beside the altar rail ;

Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing—

“Woman, with this ring I thee wed.”
What makes his voice so awing?
The baron by the bride is dead:
Outside the crows were cawing.

Chorus.

[Which grows tumultuous, seeming to fill the room with the invisible birds.]

Caw! Caw! Caw!

[The guests rise in confusion. Dickon still plays delightedly, and the strange music continues.]

MINISTER DODGE

This is no longer godly. — Justice Merton!

RICHARD

[To Justice Merton.]

I told you, sir, that witchcraft, like murder, will out.
If you want further proof, I believe I can provide it.

MINISTER DODGE

Justice Merton, sir!

RAVENSBANE

[To Rachel, who holds his tassel in her hand.]

Ah! and you have my tassel!

RACHEL

See! I will wear it now. You yourself shall fasten it.

RAVENSBANE

Rachel! Mistress!

RACHEL

My dear lord!

[As Ravensbane is placing the silken tassel on Rachel's breast to fasten it there, Richard, by the mirror, pulls the curtain back.]

RICHARD

Lovers! This is the glass of truth. Behold yourselves!

RACHEL

[Looking into the glass, screams and turns her gaze fearfully upon Ravensbane.]

Ah! Do not look!

DICKON

[Who, having turned round from the virginals, has leapt forward, now turns back again, biting his finger.]

Too late!

[In the glass are reflected the figures of Rachel and Ravensbane — Rachel just as she herself appears, but Ravensbane in his essential form of a scarecrow, in every movement reflecting Ravensbane's motions. The thing in the glass is about to pin a wisp of corn-silk on the mirrored breast of the maiden.]

RAVENSBANE

What is there?

RACHEL

[Looking again, starts away from Ravensbane.]

Leave me! Leave me! — Richard!

RAVENSBANE

[*Gazing at the glass, clings to Rachel as though to protect her.*]

Help her! See! It is seizing her.

RACHEL

Richard!

[*She faints in Richard's arms.*]

RAVENSBANE

Fear not, mistress, I will kill the thing.

[*Drawing his sword, he rushes at the glass. Within, the scarecrow, with a drawn wheel-spoke, approaches him at equal speed. They come face to face and recoil.*]

Ah! ah! fear'st thou me? What art thou? Why, 'tis a glass. Thou mockest me? Look, look, mistress, it mocks me! O God, no! no! Take it away. Dear God, do not look! — It is I!

ALL

[*Rushing to the doors.*]

Witchcraft! Witchcraft!

[*As Ravensbane stands frantically confronting his abject reflection, struck in a like posture of despair, the curtain falls.*]

ACT IV

ACT IV

The same. Night. The moon, shining in broadly at the window, discovers RAVENSBANE alone, prostrate before the mirror. Raised on one arm to a half-sitting posture, he gazes fixedly at the vaguely seen image of the scarecrow prostrate in the glass.

RAVENSBANE

All have left me — but not thou. Rachel has left me; her eyes have turned away from me; she is gone. And with her, the great light itself from heaven has drawn her glorious skirts, contemptuous, from me — and they are gone together. Dickon, he too has left me — but not thou. All that I loved, all that loved me, have left me. A thousand ages — a thousand ages ago, they went away; and thou and I have gazed upon each other's desertedness. Speak! and be pitiful! If thou art I, inscrutable image, if thou dost feel these pangs thine own, show then self-mercy; speak! What art thou? What am I? Why are we here? How comes it that we feel and guess and suffer? Nay, though thou answer not these doubts, yet mock them, mock them aloud, even as there, monstrous, thou counterfeitest mine actions. Speak, abject enigma! — Ah! with what vacant horror it looks out and yearns toward me. Peace to thee!

Thou poor delirious mute, prisoned in glass and moonlight, peace! Thou canst not escape thy gaol, nor I break in to thee.) Poor shadow, thou —

[*Recoiling wildly.*]

Stand back, inanity! Thrust not thy mawkish face in pity toward me. Ape and idiot! Scarecrow! — to console me! Haha! — A flail and broomstick! a cob, a gourd and pumpkin, to fuse and sublimate themselves into a mage-philosopher, who puffeth metaphysics from a pipe and discourseth sweet philanthropy to itself — itself, God! Dost Thou hear? Itself! For even such am I — I whom Thou madest to love Rachel. Why, God — haha! dost Thou dwell in this thing? Is it Thou that peerest forth *at* me — *from* me? Why, hark then; Thou shalt listen, and answer — if Thou canst. Hark then, Spirit of life! Between the rise and setting of a sun, I have walked in this world of Thine. I have gazed upon it, I have peered within it, I have grown enamoured, enamoured of it. I have been thrilled with wonder, I have been calmed with knowledge, I have been exalted with sympathy. I have trembled with joy and passion. Power, beauty, love have ravished me. Infinity itself, like a dream, has blazed before me with the certitude of prophecy; and I have cried, "This world, the heavens, time itself, are mine to conquer," and I have thrust forth mine arm to wear Thy shield forever — and lo! for my shield Thou reachest-me a mirror — and whisperest: "Know thyself! Thou art — a scarecrow: a tinkling clod, a rigmarole of dust,

a lump of ordure, contemptible, superfluous, inane!" Haha! Hahaha! And with such scarecrows Thou dost people a planet! O ludicrous! Monstrous! Ludicrous! At least, I thank Thee, God! at least, this breathing bathos can laugh at itself. (At least this hotch-potch nobleman of stubble is enough of an epicure to turn his own gorge.) Thou hast vouchsafed to me, Spirit, — hahaha! — to know myself. Mine, mine is the consummation of man — even self-contempt!

[Pointing in the glass with an agony of derision.]

Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS

[More and more faintly.]

Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

[Ravensbane throws himself prone upon the floor, beneath the window, sobbing. There is a pause of silence, and the moon shines brighter. — Slowly then Ravensbane, getting to his knees, looks out into the night.]

RAVENSBANE

What face are you, high up through the twinkling leaves? Why do you smile upon me with such white beneficence? Or why do you place your viewless hand upon my brow, and say, "Be comforted"? Do you not, like all the rest, turn, aghast, your eyes away from me — me, abject enormity, grovelling at your feet? Gracious being, do you not fear — despise me? To you alone am I not hateful — unredeemed?

O white peace of the world, beneath your gaze the clouds glow silver, and the herded cattle, slumbering far afield, crouch — beautiful. The slough shines lustrous as a bridal veil. Beautiful face, you are Rachel's, and you have changed the world. Nothing is mean, but you have made it miraculous; nothing is loathsome, nothing ludicrous, but you have converted it to loveliness, that even this shadow of a mockery myself, cast by your light, gives me the dear assurance I am a man. Yea, more, that I too, steeped in your universal light, am beautiful. For you are Rachel, and you love me. You are Rachel in the sky, and the might of your serene loveliness has transformed me. Rachel, mistress, mother, beautiful spirit, out of my suffering you have brought forth my soul. I am saved!

THE IMAGE IN THE GLASS

A very pretty sophistry.

[*The moonlight grows dimmer, as at the passing of a cloud.*]

RAVENSBANE

Ah! what voice has snatched you from me?

THE IMAGE

A most poetified pumpkin!

RAVENSBANE

Thing! dost thou speak at last? My soul abhors thee.

THE IMAGE

I *am* thy soul.

RAVENSBANE

Thou liest.

THE IMAGE

Our Daddy Dickon and our mother Rickby begot
and conceived us at sunrise, in a Jack-o'-lantern.

RAVENSBANE

Thou liest, torturing illusion. Thou art but a phan-
tom in a glass.

THE IMAGE

Why, very true. So art thou. *We* are a pretty
phantom in a glass.

RAVENSBANE

It is a lie. I am no longer thou. I feel it; I am
a man.

THE IMAGE

And prithee, what's a man? Man's but a mirror,
Wherein the imps and angels play charades,
Make faces, mope, and pull each other's hair —
Till crack! the sly urchin Death shivers the glass,
And the bare coffin boards show underneath.

RAVENSBANE

Yea! if it be so, thou cogger! if both of us be in-
deed but illusions, why, now let us end together. But
if it be not so, then let *me* for evermore be free of
thee. Now is the test — the glass!

[*Springing to the fireplace, he seizes an iron cross-piece from
the andirons.*]

I'll play your urchin Death and shatter it. Let see what shall survive!

[*He rushes to strike the glass with the iron. DICKON steps out of the mirror, closing the curtain.*]

DICKON

I wouldn't, really!

RAVENSBANE

Dickon! dear Dickon! is it you?

DICKON

Yes, Jacky! it's dear Dickon, and I really wouldn't.

RAVENSBANE

Wouldn't what, Dickon?

DICKON

Sweep the cobwebs off the sky with thine aspiring broomstick. When a man questions fate, 'tis bad digestion. When a scarecrow does it, 'tis bad taste.

RAVENSBANE

At last, *you* will tell me the truth, Dickon! Am I then — that thing?

DICKON

You mustn't be so sceptical. Of course you're that thing.

RAVENSBANE

Ah me despicable! Rachel, why didst thou ever look upon me?

DICKON

I fear, cobby, thou hast never studied woman's heart and hero-worship. Take thyself now. I remarked to Goody Bess, thy mother, this morning, as I was chucking her thy pate from the hay-loft, that thou wouldst make a Mark Antony or an Alexander before night.

RAVENSBANE

Thou, then, didst create me!

DICKON

[*Bowing.*]

Appreciate the honour. Your lordship was designed for a corn-field; but I discerned nobler potentialities: the courts of Europe and Justice Merton's *salon*. In brief, your lordship's origins were pastoral, like King David's.

RAVENSBANE

Cease! cease! in pity's name. You do not know the agony of being ridiculous.

DICKON

Nay, Jacky, all mortals are ridiculous. Like you, ^X they were rummaged out of the muck; and like you, they shall return to the dunghill. I advise 'em, like you, to enjoy the interim, and smoke.

RAVENSBANE

This pipe, this ludicrous pipe that I forever set to my lips and puff! Why must I, Dickon? Why?

DICKON

To avoid extinction — merely. You see, 'tis just as your fellow in there

[*Pointing to the glass.*]

explained. You yourself are the subtlest of mirrors, polished out of pumpkin and pipe-smoke. Into this mirror the fair Mistress Rachel has projected her lovely image, and thus provided you with what men call a soul.

RAVENSBANE

Ah! then, I have a soul — the truth of me? Mistress Rachel has indeed made me a man?

DICKON

Don't flatter thyself, cobby. Break thy pipe, and whiff — soul, Mistress Rachel, man, truth, and this pretty world itself, go up in the last smoke.

RAVENSBANE

No, no! not Mistress Rachel — for she is beautiful; and the images of beauty are immutable. She told me so.

DICKON

What a Platonic young lady! Nevertheless, believe me, Mistress Rachel exists for your lordship merely in your lordship's pipe-bowl.

RAVENSBANE

Wretched, niggling caricature that I am! All is lost to me — all!

DICKON

"Paradise Lost" again! Always blaming it on me. There's that gaunt fellow in England has lately wrote a parody on me when I was in the apple business.

RAVENSBANE

[Falling on his knees and bowing his head.]

O God! I am so contemptible!

[Enter, at door back, GOODY RICKBY; her blacksmith garb is hidden under a dingy black mantle with peaked hood.]

DICKON

Good verse, too, for a parody!

[Ruminating, raises one arm rhetorically above Ravensbane.]

"Farewell, happy fields
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors; hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor."

GOODY RICKBY

[Seizing his arm.]

Dickon!

DICKON

Hullo! You, Bess!

GOODY RICKBY

There's not a minute to lose. Justice Merton and the neighbours have ended their conference at Minister Dodge's, and are returning here.

DICKON

What! coming back in the dark? They ran away in the daylight as if the ghosts were after 'em.

GOODY RICKBY

[At the window.]

I see their lanterns down the road.

DICKON

Well, let 'em come. We're ready.

GOODY RICKBY

But thou toldst me they had discovered —

DICKON

A scarecrow in a mirror. Well? The glass is bewitched; that's all.

GOODY RICKBY

All? Witchcraft is hanging — that's all! Come, how shall the mirror help us?

DICKON

'Tis very simple. The glass is bewitched. Mistress Rachel — mind you — shall admit it. She bought it of you.

GOODY RICKBY

Yea, of me; 'twill be me they'll hang.

DICKON

Good! then the glass is bewitched. The glass bewitches the room; for witchcraft is catching and

spreads like the small-pox. *Ergo*, the distorted image of Lord Ravensbane; *ergo*, the magical accompaniments of the ballad; *ergo*, the excited fancies of all the persons in the room. *Ergo*, the glass must needs be destroyed, and the room thoroughly disinfected by the Holy Scriptures. *Ergo*, Master Dickonson himself reads the Bible aloud, the guests apologize and go home, the Justice squirms again in his merry dead past, and his fair niece is wed to the pumpkin.

RAVENSBANE

Hideous! Hideous!

GOODY RICKBY

Your grateful servant, Devil! But the mirror was bought of me — of me, the witch. Wilt thou be my hangman, Dickon?

DICKON

Wilt thou give me a kiss, Goody? When did ever thy Dickon desert thee?

GOODY RICKBY

But how, boy, wilt thou —

DICKON

Trust me, and thy son. When the Justice's niece is thy daughter-in-law, all will be safe. For the Justice will cherish his niece's family.

GOODY RICKBY

But when he knows —

DICKON

But he shall *not* know. How can he? When the glass is denounced as fraudulent, how will he, or any person, ever know that we made this fellow out of rubbish? Who, forsooth, but a poet — or a devil — *would* believe it? You mustn't credit men with our imaginations, my dear.

RAVENSBANE

Mockery! Always mockery!

GOODY RICKBY

Then thou wilt pull me through this safe?

DICKON

As I adore thee — and my own reputation.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Hurrying away.*]

Till we meet, then, boy.

DICKON

Stay, marchioness — his lordship!

GOODY RICKBY

[*Turning.*]

His lordship's pardon! How fares "the bottom of thy heart," my son?

DICKON

My lord — your lady mother.

RAVENSBANE

Begone, woman.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Courtesying, laughs shrilly.*]

Your servant — my son !

[*About to depart.*]

RAVENSBANE

Ye lie ! Both of you ! Ye lie — I was born of Rachel.

DICKON

Tut, tut, Jacky ; you mustn't mix up mothers and prospective wives at your age. It's fatal.

GOODY RICKBY

[*Excitedly.*]

They're coming !

[*Exit.*]

DICKON

[*Calling after her.*]

Fear not ; if thou shouldst be followed, I will overtake thee.

RAVENSBANE

She is coming ; Rachel is coming, and I may not look upon her !

DICKON

Eh ? Why not ?

RAVENSBANE

I am a monster.

DICKON

(And born of her —) Fie! fie!

RAVENSBANE

O God! I know not; I mock myself; I know not what to think. But this I know, I love Rachel. I love her, I love her.

DICKON

And shalt have her.

RAVENSBANE

Have her, Dickon?

DICKON

For lover and wife.

RAVENSBANE

For wife?

DICKON

For wife and all. Thou hast but to obey.

RAVENSBANE

Ah! who will do this for me?

DICKON

I!

RAVENSBANE

Dickon! Wilt make me a man — a man and worthy of her?

DICKON

Fiddlededee! I make over no masterpieces. Thy mistress shall be Cinderella, and drive to her palace with her gilded pumpkin.

RAVENSBANE

It is the end.

DICKON

What! You'll not?

RAVENSBANE

Never.

DICKON

Harkee, manikin. Hast thou learned to suffer?

RAVENSBANE

[Wringing his hands.]

O God!

DICKON

I taught thee. Shall I teach thee further?

RAVENSBANE

Thou canst not.

DICKON

Cannot — ha! What if I should teach Rachel too?

RAVENSBANE

Rachel! — Ah! now I know thee.

DICKON

[Bowing.]

Flattered.

RAVENSBANE

Devil! Thou wouldst not torment Rachel?

DICKON

Not if my lord —

RAVENSBANE

Speak! What must I do?

DICKON

Not speak. Be silent, my lord, and acquiesce to all I say.

RAVENSBANE

I will be silent.

DICKON

And acquiesce?

RAVENSBANE

I will be silent.

[*Enter MINISTER DODGE, accompanied by SIR CHARLES REDDINGTON, CAPTAIN BUGBY, the REV. MASTERS RAND and TODD, and followed by JUSTICE MERTON, RICHARD, MISTRESS MERTON, and RACHEL. Richard and Rachel stand somewhat apart, Rachel drawing close to Richard and hiding her face. All wear their outer wraps, and two or three hold lanterns, which, save the moon, throw the only light upon the scene. All enter solemn and silent.*]

MINISTER DODGE

Lord, be Thou present with us, in this unholy spot.

SEVERAL MEN'S VOICES

Amen.

DICKON

Friends! Have you seized her? Is she made prisoner?

MINISTER DODGE

Stand from us.

DICKON

Sir, the witch ! Surely you did not let her escape ?

ALL

The witch !

DICKON

A dame in a peaked hood. She has but now fled the house. She called herself — Goody Rickby.

ALL

Goody Rickby !

MISTRESS MERTON

She here !

DICKON

Yea, mistress, and hath confessed all the damnable art, by which all of us have lately been so terrorized, and his lordship, my poor master, so maligned and victimized.

RICHARD

Victimized !

JUSTICE MERTON

What confessed she ?

MINISTER DODGE

What said she ?

DICKON

This : It appeareth that, for some time past, she hath cherished revengeful thoughts against our honoured host, Justice Merton.

JUSTICE MERTON

Sir! What cause — what cause —

DICKON

Inasmuch as your worship hath ever so righteously condemned her damnable faults, and threatened them punishment.

MINISTER DODGE

Yea — well?

DICKON

Thus, in revenge, she bewitched yonder mirror, and this very morning unlawfully inveigled this sweet young lady into purchasing it.

SIR CHARLES

Mistress Rachel!

MINISTER DODGE

[To Rachel.]

Didst thou purchase that glass?

RACHEL

[In a low voice.]

Yes.

MINISTER DODGE

From Goody Rickby?

RACHEL

Yes.

RICHARD

Sir — the blame was mine.

RACHEL

[*Clinging to him.*]

O Richard!

DICKON

Pardon, my friends. The fault rests upon no one here. The witch alone is to blame. Her black art inveigled this innocent maid into purchasing the glass; her black art bewitched this room and all that it contained—even to these innocent virginals, on which I played.

MINISTER DODGE

Verily, this would seem to account—but the image; the damnable image in the glass?

DICKON

A familiar devil of hers—a sly imp, it seems, who wears to mortal eyes the shape of a scarecrow. 'Twas he, by means of whom she bedevilled this glass, by making it his *habitat*. When, therefore, she learned that honour and happiness were yours, Justice Merton, in the prospect of Lord Ravensbane as your nephew-in-law, she commanded this devil to reveal himself in the glass as my lord's own image, that thus she might wreck your family felicity.

MINISTER DODGE

Infamous!

DICKON

Indeed, sir, it was this very devil whom but now she stole here to consult withal, when she encoun-

tered me, attendant here upon my poor prostrate lord, and — held by the wrath in my eye — confessed it all.

SIR CHARLES

Thunder and brimstone! Where is this accursed hag?

DICKON

Alas — gone, gone! If you had but stopped her.

MINISTER DODGE

I know her den — the blacksmith shop.

SIR CHARLES

[*Starting.*]

Which way?

MINISTER DODGE

To the left.

SIR CHARLES

Go on, there.

MINISTER DODGE

My honoured friend, we shall return and officially destroy this fatal glass. But first, we must secure the witch. Heaven shield, with her guilt, the innocent!

THE MEN

[*As they hurry out.*]

Amen.

SIR CHARLES

[*Outside.*]

Go on!

[*Exeunt all but Richard, Rachel, Justice Merton, Mistress Merton, Dickon, and Ravensbane.*]

DICKON

[*To Justice Merton, who has importuned him, aside.*]

And reveal thy youthful escapades to Rachel?

JUSTICE MERTON

God help me! no.

DICKON

So then, dear friends, this strange incident is happily elucidated. The pain and contumely have fallen most heavily upon my dear lord and master, but you are witnesses, even now, of his silent and Christian forgiveness of your suspicions. Bygones, therefore, be bygones. The future brightens — with orange-blossoms! Hymen and Felicity stand with us here ready to unite two amorous and bashful lovers. His lordship is reticent; yet to you alone, of all beautiful ladies, Mistress Rachel —

RAVENSBANE

[*In a mighty voice.*]

Silence!

DICKON

My lord would —

RAVENSBANE

Silence! Dare not to speak to her!

DICKON

[*Biting his lip.*]

My babe is weaned.

RACHEL

[Still at Richard's side.]

Oh, my lord, if I have made you suffer —

RICHARD

[Appealingly.]

Rachel!

RAVENSBANE

[Approaching her, raises one arm to screen his face.]

Gracious lady! let fall your eyes; look not upon me. If I have dared remain in your presence, if I dare now speak once more to you, 'tis because I would have you know — O forgive me! — that I love you.

RICHARD

Sir! This lady has renewed her promise to be my wife.

RAVENSBANE

Your wife, or not, I love her.

RICHARD

Zounds!

RAVENSBANE

Forbear, and hear me! For one wonderful day I have gazed upon this, your world. The sun has kindled me and the moon has blessed me. A million forms — of trees, of stones, of stars, of men, of common things — have swum like motes before my eyes; but one alone was wholly beautiful. That form was Rachel: to her alone I was not ludicrous; to her I

also was beautiful. Therefore, I love her. You talk to me of mothers, mistresses, lovers, and wives and sisters, and you say men love these. What is love? The sun's enkindling and the moon's quiescence; the night and day of the world — the *all* of life, the all which must include both you and me and God, of whom you dream. Well then, I love you, Rachel. What shall prevent me? Mistress, mother, wife — thou art all to me!

RICHARD

My lord, I can only reply for Mistress Rachel, that you speak like one who does not understand this world.

RAVENSBANE

O God! Sir, and do you? If so, tell me — tell me before it be too late — why, in this world, such a thing as *I* can love and talk of love. Why, in this world, a true man and woman, like you and your betrothed, can look upon this counterfeit and be deceived.

RACHEL AND RICHARD

Counterfeit?

RAVENSBANE

Me — on me — the ignominy of the earth, the laughing-stock of the angels!

RACHEL

Why, my lord. Are you not —

RAVENSBANE

No.

JUSTICE MERTON

[*To Ravensbane.*]

Forbear! Not to her —

DICKON

My lord forgets.

RACHEL

Are you not Lord Ravensbane?

RAVENSBANE

Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova? No, I am *not* Lord Ravensbane. I am Lord Scarecrow!

[*He bursts into laughter.*]

RACHEL

[*Shrinking back.*]

Ah me!

RAVENSBANE

A nobleman of husks, bewitched from a pumpkin.

RACHEL

The image in the glass was true?

RAVENSBANE

Yes, true. It is the glass of truth—thank God! Thank God for you, dear.

JUSTICE MERTON

Richard! Go for the minister; this proof of witchcraft needs be known.

[*Richard does not move.*]

DICKON

My lord, this grotesque absurdity must end.

RAVENSBANE

True, Dickon! This grotesque absurdity must end. The laughter and the laughing-stock, man and the worm, possess at least one dignity in common: both must die. *

DICKON

[*Speaking low.*]

Remember! if you dare — Rachel shall suffer for it.

RAVENSBANE

You lie. She is above your power.

DICKON

Still, thou darest not —

RAVENSBANE

Fool, I dare.

[*Turning to Rachel.*]

Mistress, this pipe is I. This intermittent smoke holds, in its nebula, Venus, Mars, the world. If I should break it — Chaos and the dark! And this of me that now stands up will sink jumbled upon the floor — a scarecrow. See! I break it.

[*He breaks the pipe in his hands, and flings the pieces at Dickon's feet in defiance; then turns, agonized, to Rachel.*]

Oh, Rachel, could I have been a man — !

DICKON

[Picking up the pieces of pipe, turns to Rachel.]

Mademoiselle, I felicitate you; you have outwitted the devil.

[Kissing his fingers to her, he disappears.]

MISTRESS MERTON

[Seizing the Justice's arm in fright.]

Satan!

JUSTICE MERTON

[Whispers.]

Gone!

RACHEL

Richard! Richard! support him.

RICHARD

[Sustaining Ravensbane, who sways.]

He is fainting. A chair!

RACHEL

[Placing a chair, helps Richard to support Ravensbane toward it.]

How pale; but yet no change.

RICHARD

His heart, perhaps.

RACHEL

Oh, Dick, if it should be some strange mistake! Look! he is noble still. My lord! my lord! the glass.—

[She draws the curtain of the mirror, just opposite which Ravensbane has sunk into the chair. At her cry, he starts up faintly and gazes at his reflection, which is seen to be a normal image of himself.]

RAVENSBANE

Who is it?

RACHEL

Yourself, my lord — 'tis the glass of truth.

RAVENSBANE

[His face lighting with an exalted joy, starts to his feet, erect, before the glass.]

A man!

[He falls back into the arms of the two lovers.]

Rachel!

[He dies.]

RACHEL

Richard, I am afraid. Was it a chimera, or a hero?

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